



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**January 29 – February 4, 2016**

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# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## Disappearing indigenous art form of quillwork set for museum display

Dolorès Contré-Migwans will be displaying her artwork at the St. Boniface Museum.



Dolorès Contré-Migwans with her art at Le Musée de Saint-Boniface Museum.

**By:** Meg Crane For Metro Published on Sun Jan 31 2016

Dolorès Contré-Migwans is weaving a modern twist through a traditional indigenous art form.

Quillwork, the weaving of porcupine quills through birchbark, is becoming more difficult to do, she said, as the health of birch trees declines due to environmental damage, leaving less useable bark.

To get around this, Contré-Migwans found a way to create a paper made out of linen and de-fibered birch bark that can be used for quillwork.

But she still uses sheets of birchbark when she can.

“To me, the most powerful experience is doing this quillwork on the bark,” said Contré-Migwans, adding it’s a way for her to connect with nature.

“There’s something special that is alive in the bark and the quill. When you mix those two together as a marriage, it’s a kind of dynamic that reaches your gut somehow,” said Contré-Migwans.

Contré-Migwans said Le Musée de Saint-Boniface Museum, where she will be showing her art this month, actually has old pieces of quillwork in its permanent exhibits.

“What is great is that we are still doing it today. There is a continuation of the tradition,” Contré-Migwans said.

However, Contré-Migwans isn’t strictly following the traditional way of doing quillwork; she is adding contemporary art to her pieces.

Painting and beadwork are incorporated into Contré-Migwans’ quillwork, meaning her type of art is unique in the world because of the combination.

Her work will be on display at the museum from Feb. 3 to March 23.

On Feb. 15 for Louis Riel Day, Contré-Migwans will be demonstrating quillwork during the day at the museum. She will also be there 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. the rest of the week.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/2016/02/01/disappearing-indigenous-art-form-of-quillwork-set-for-museum.html>

## **Performance art? Inuit art? An embrace of Arctic heritage? —Call it unforgettable.**

BY PAUL GESSELL

POSTED FEBRUARY 1, 2016 1:36 PM

**To understand just how far Inuit art has travelled from the days of soapstone carvings**, head to the outdoor skating rink on Brewery Creek in Gatineau on Feb. 22. There, behind Galerie Axe Néo-7, you will hear, live, the primordial, unnerving, mystical screeches and growls of Inuit throat-singer **Tanya Tagaq** providing a soundscape to a showing of the classic silent film of 1922, *Nanook of the North*.

Call it performance art. Call it Inuit art. Call it an embrace of our Arctic heritage. Call it unforgettable.

The performance by Tagaq, winner of the 2014 Polaris Prize, will actually be inside Axe Néo-7 in one of the exhibition galleries. Seating is extremely limited. But Brewery Creek skaters will hear her for free via outdoor speakers as the Nanook film, a docudrama, unspools outside.



Tanya Tagaq. Photo: Ivan Otis, courtesy of Axe Néo-7.

Tagaq's soundscape for Nanook was commissioned by the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival. She has performed the soundscape many times since in Canada and abroad.

Skaters on the creek **Feb. 22** can also go ashore to visit temporary pavilions by Axe Néo-7, with ice sculptures and reproductions of work by some of the Arctic's most celebrated artists, including **Shuvina Ashoona** and **Tim Pitsiulak**. (Actually, the art-filled pavilions are already in place.) This celebration of Inuit creativity is all part of an exhibition at Axe Néo-7 running **until March 5**. Titled *Floe Edge: Contemporary Art and Collaborations from Nunavut*, the exhibition offers a wide range of contemporary Inuit art, from video to drawings and outré fashion.



Sealskin decorated stilettos by Nicole Camphaug. Photo courtesy of Axe Néo-7.

Inside the gallery, head straight for the sealskin decorated stilettos by **Nicole Camphaug** or the matching sealskin bra and panties by **Nala Peter**. They are totally

impractical, drenched in kitsch and thoroughly delightful, thus possessing all the qualities of the over-the-top garments seen on the runways of Paris or Milan. And, of course, sealskin fashions – even ironic ones in an art gallery – would undoubtedly send all the bleeding-heart European seal-huggers into a frenzy of outrage. Consider this show an upraised Inuit middle finger in the faces of Brigitte Bardot, Paul McCartney and other self-appointed protectors of Canada’s big-eyed baby seals.



Premier of Greenland, Kim-Kielson and Zarina Oloxo Kopyrina of Russia wearing Mathew Nuqingaq’s sterling silver snow goggles. Photo courtesy of Axe Néo-7.

The sealskin fashions and an equally kitschy pair of impractical sterling silver snow goggles, by **Mathew Nuqingaq**, take centre-stage in a room whose walls are filled with the stunning landscape photographs by **Niore Iqalukjuak**, who works for an Inuit advocacy group travelling around the Arctic and, in his spare time, taking photographs everywhere he goes. Iqalukjuak is typical of the artists in *Floe Edge*: they tend to be artists with other jobs who find creative ways to combine art and work, whether that means being a parka seamstress creating political fashions, or a jeweller creating snow goggles that serve as an objet d’art. The objects seen in *Floe Edge* were selected by Kathleen Nicholls from the Iqaluit-based Nunavut Arts and Craft Association.



A stunning landscape photograph by Niore Iqalukjuak. Photo courtesy of Axe Néo-7.

The most eye-popping work in *Floe Edge* is “Gauge,” a multi-channel video created by a team of Northern and Southern artists who painted a giant wall of snow with a series of evocative dark shapes. The painted wall appears to rise and then to sink rapidly into the snow. This is accomplished through the magic of time-lapse photography and the changing ocean tides that alternately cover and reveal the wall. Be prepared to “ahh” and “ooh.”

*Floe Edge* does not contain a single soapstone carving, or a print of a snowy owl. Instead, we get works like “Hunter with Kativak” by **Mona Netser**. Hunter is a metre-high, doll-like sculpture standing atop a white pedestal resembling a jagged snowy cliff. The hunter’s long hair completely obscures its face. The effect is haunting and malevolent and, like a performance of Tanya Tagaq, totally unforgettable.

*Floe Edge* continues at Axe Néo-7 until March 5. For info, [here](#). For a teaser of Tanya Tagaq’s soundscape for *Nanook of the North*, check out this video:

Those interested in Aboriginal art might want to take in three other concurrent exhibitions.

One is a group show of some of the country’s top female Aboriginal artists, including **Ruth Cuthand**, **Daphne Odjig**, and Ottawa’s **Rosalie Favell**. The show at the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Art Gallery in Gatineau is called *Mamawo Payiwak: They Gather Together in One Place*. The show continues **until May 27**. For info, email [art@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](mailto:art@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca).



*Continuum: Abstraction in Contemporary Indigenous Art* is a small exhibition on Aboriginal abstract art at Carleton University Art Gallery that runs **until April 19** and showcases works by **Rita Letendre, Robert Houle, and Alex Janvier**.

Ottawa artist **Barry Ace** uses everything from beadwork to repurposed computer parts to create multi-media art referencing Aboriginal iconography. His solo exhibition, *Mnemonic (Re)Manifestations*, continues at Karsh-Masson Gallery in Ottawa City Hall **until March 6**.

**Direct Link:** <http://ottawamagazine.com/arts-and-culture/73339/>

## **B.C. Aboriginal Doors program helps indigenous artists create prints of their carvings**

by Charlie Smith on February 1st, 2016 at 9:59 AM



By selling limited-edition prints, there's a possibility of generating more revenue from each piece of art.UBC

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The University of British Columbia is offering First Nations artists a means for possibly turbocharging their incomes.

The B.C. Aboriginal Doors program was conceived by UBC forestry professor Chris Gaston and Brenda Crabtree, the aboriginal program manager at Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

There's a \$2-billion worldwide market for indigenous art, according to Gaston, who's UBC's liaison to FPInnovations. It's a nonprofit science-based organization that helps aboriginal communities enhance economic opportunities through forestry and wood products.

Under the B.C. Aboriginal Doors program, carvers spend four weeks free of charge learning from mentors at Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver or the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art in Terrace.

When the program debuted last summer, 10 artists each hand-carved an elaborate design on a 26" X 70" door.

"These story panels are actually carved from both yellow cedar and red cedar," Crabtree says in the video below. "This project also embraces the cultural connection that aboriginal artists have to cedar. Cedar for aboriginal artists throughout B.C. is actually our tree of life."

Gaston said the next step is "to bring technology into the equation" by helping artists do limited-edition prints with modern scanning and computer-numerical-control technology.

According to Gaston, the original carved doors might sell for \$20,000, but there's a limited market of people willing to pay that price.

Reproductions, however, can sell for smaller prices, just as prints sell for less than the price of an original painting.

The goal is to make the work of B.C. aboriginal artists more accessible to a larger number of buyers around the world, thereby increasing the amount of money they can make from their carvings.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/arts/628316/bc-aboriginal-doors-program-helps-indigenous-artists-create-prints-their-carvings>

## **Aboriginal artist Wayne Ashley aims to honour fallen first responders**

**Total installation would cost up to \$26,000**

By Laura Osman, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 01, 2016 3:07 PM MT Last Updated: Feb 01, 2016 7:51 PM MT





City councillors are looking to a local artist to help honour first responders who have been killed on the job, in the wake of the death of Const. Daniel Woodall.

Wayne Ashley donated a piece of artwork to the city to memorialize first responders after the attacks on 9/11. Council will now review a plan to expand that installation, which sits inside City Hall, to include the names of all police officers, firefighters and paramedics who have been killed in Edmonton.

The existing artwork includes a stone table and two stone murals that tell the story of emergency service workers who protect the world, said Ashley.

"It was always in the back of my mind to have an addition with the names of the fallen of the police, fire and emergency service workers," he said.

"When you see the table and you see the story behind it, you see the men and women who've given their lives to protect you and I."

## **Dedicated to fallen first responders**

Ashley got the idea to expand the installation after the deaths of Const. David Wynn, who was shot in St. Albert last January, and Const. Daniel Woodall, an Edmonton police officer who was killed in June.

Council hopes to install a pane of glass etched with the names of every fallen first responder, as well as two new stone murals that depict eagles soaring over the city.

The entire installation would cost between \$20,000 and \$26,000.

The other option is to mount the etched glass on the nearby pillars in City Hall, which may eliminate the need for the new murals.

Police already have a memorial downtown, and fire rescue services have a memorial in Old Strathcona. The police list 10 fallen officers, while the fire rescue memorial lists 25 names.

Coun. Bryan Anderson said it would be nice to have a central place where all the names can be found inside City Hall.

"I think all of us need to reflect on the fact that there are others in our world who give to us so that we can live our lives," Anderson said.

City staff are working with Ashley to create a design, which will be presented to councillors in April.

Ashley also hopes to donate a third mural to honour murdered and missing women as part of the installation.

He said he would maintain and repair the piece for free.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/aboriginal-artist-wayne-ashley-aims-to-honour-fallen-first-responders-1.3429142>

## Tracey Lindberg on telling indigenous stories



Tracey Lindberg's first novel, *Birdie*, is one of five books in the running for CBC's Canada Reads 2016. (HarperCollins Canada)

**Monday February 01, 2016**

CBC's [Canada Reads](#) is coming up on March 21-24, and this year's theme is "starting over." In the coming weeks, Shelagh Rogers will be chatting with the five authors whose books have been selected for the annual battle of the books. The series kicks off this week with [Tracey Lindberg](#), the author of [Birdie](#), which will be defended by G Adventures founder [Bruce Poon Tip](#) during Canada Reads.

Lindberg grew up in northern Alberta, in the Kelly Lake Cree Nation. She studied law, and now teaches indigenous law at Athabasca University and the University of Ottawa. In law school, she often found herself drafting stories instead of taking notes, and she's still writing now on top of her career as a successful lawyer and professor. Her debut novel, *Birdie*, is the story of a young woman who is struggling to recover from an abusive past. It deals with some dark themes, but it's also a luminous, funny novel that brings Cree stories and cultural traditions to life. Tracey Lindberg spoke to Shelagh Rogers in Toronto before the Canada Reads shortlist announcement.

### ON FINDING STORIES TO TELL

As I hear people talk, at the law school or on the news, I keep thinking: Whose voices aren't we hearing? Who haven't we listened to? And then sometimes when a person's voice comes through that's powerful and resonates and you don't expect it, I think: Now *that's* a story.

## ON TELLING AN INDIGENOUS STORY WITHOUT COLONIAL FILTERS

I do a lot of work with indigenous communities and nations that govern themselves inherently. They're not people who subscribe to the Indian Act — they continue to govern from the lodge. And I've sat down with them and said: Tell me about how it is that your laws relate to child welfare. And they look at me like: What language is that? And then I'll say things like: Who is it that make decisions about kids? Who makes decisions about women? Who is it that makes decisions about the best way to live? And they can tell you that. And it somehow colonizes it to even call it [the law]. I'm asking them to put it through a filter that doesn't necessarily look like the Cree place that they come from. And with the book, what I've hopefully done here is not tried to colonize the way that [Birdie protagonist] Bernice or her family think about the law, but to put out very clearly that as women, there are lawful obligations to be followed. Particularly when there is lawlessness within the community.

## HOW BIRDIE DEALS WITH ABUSE AND STARTING OVER

Bernice has made a decision to find *home*. She's never had a healthy place. She's had this upbringing where the place that she's living with her family was not safe. Physically she was not safe — there were attacks made on her as a child, where she was viewed as sexual before she ever made the decision to be viewed as sexual. I could tell you from my own experience how many of our family members have those random "uncles," who are allowed to come and go as they please. But they have no reciprocal obligation to the people of the house, so they don't have to be kind, and they don't have to take care of or be responsible for people's safety. I think what Bernice needs in her home is a reciprocal obligation between her and the people around her. She's looking for understanding, and she can't find it.

## ON WHAT SHE HOPES READERS WILL LEARN FROM HER BOOK

It changes from day to day. Sometimes I just want people to recognize that we are relatives. Sometimes I just want them to look at Bernice and say, "Aaah. That is a cousin. That is somebody that I have responsibility for." Some days, that's enough. Other days, I really want people to get a broader picture. I don't want to be preachy about it, but I want people to understand that individuals do make choices, but sometimes those choices are quite limited by the circumstances in which you have been placed. Or you have been defined by, or marginalized by, the circumstances that create an environment where hostility and violence can take place. I don't want people to say "bad uncles," I want people to say, "How do we ensure that families are safe places?"

*Tracey Lindberg's comments have been edited and condensed.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thenextchapter/tracey-lindberg-tom-jackson-and-mary-dalton-1.3422758/tracey-lindberg-on-telling-indigenous-stories-1.3422766>

# Innovative program opens new doors to B.C.'s indigenous artists

MARSHA LEDERMAN

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Feb. 01, 2016 7:44PM EST

Last updated Monday, Feb. 01, 2016 7:53PM EST

Some indigenous artists in British Columbia are combining ancient traditions with new technology to create an innovative business model for their work.

Through the Aboriginal Doors program, indigenous carvers create door panels, which are then reproduced roughly by computer on red or yellow cedar and finished by hand. The reproductions can be sold at a much lower price – making this authentic aboriginal art more affordable and accessible, while also allowing the artists to earn more income from their work.

“It makes it more affordable for people who really want to have a piece of First Nations artwork,” says Coast Salish carver James Harry, 26. “Because this way it doesn’t take us as long to produce them but you’re still getting the authenticity of the hand-carved finish.”

This program is the brainchild of Chris Gaston, associate professor in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia, who took his idea to Emily Carr University of Art and Design.

“The original took up to eight weeks to carve. The [Computer Numerical Control] machines could make a rough copy in literally a matter of hours,” explains Prof. Gaston, who is also the university liaison with the non-profit forestry research centre FPIInnovations.

“It was quite a genius idea that Chris had,” Emily Carr’s aboriginal program co-ordinator Brenda Crabtree says. “What we loved about it was it was a cultural initiative that actually had economic benefits that were not only developing business models for aboriginal artists but helping them with employment opportunities.”

Ten artists from indigenous communities across B.C. spent four weeks last summer studying at Emily Carr in Vancouver and the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art in Terrace, led by master carvers – Rick Harry, also known as Xwalacktun, in Vancouver; and Ken McNeil in Terrace. Each artist – ranging from emerging to more experienced carvers – was tasked with hand-carving an original 66-centimetre by 177-cm door panel.

“It was really interesting from my perspective because I’ve been carving my whole life,” says James Harry – Xwalacktun’s son – who created a work he describes as a self-

portrait, with imagery that includes a thunderbird, wolf and bear. “It was interesting to see ... carvers I’d never met before; to see their technique.”

Once completed, the panels are scanned and reproduced. The artists then spend a few days hand-finishing the replicas, which are considerably less expensive than the original.

Depending on the artist, the originals could sell anywhere from \$5,000 to \$30,000, Prof. Gaston figures, whereas the hand-finished reproductions would sell for as little as \$2,000 to \$6,000. (Prices will be worked out between the artist and the buyer, and also depend on the number of limited-edition copies the artist decides they want cut.)

The artist owns the original work. “We’re trying very hard to make sure that all of the intellectual property remains with the artist,” Prof. Gaston said, adding he hopes to show the pieces everywhere from international home shows to Canadian museums.

Ms. Crabtree says Emily Carr University will purchase several of the panels for its new campus, now under construction. There has also been interest from developers and corporations. But with the price point, she says the panels are not out of reach for individual homeowners either. She is planning to buy one herself.

“You have really affordable aboriginal art; you have really functional aboriginal art,” Ms. Crabtree says. “So our expectations are once we’re finished with this project and we get [the artists] to get their price points all set, they can just do it all themselves.”

And if this round proves successful, Prof. Gaston hopes to keep the program going.

“Hopefully we’re just creating a template to do this sort of thing again.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/innovative-program-opens-new-doors-to-bcs-indigenous-artists-carvers/article28497891/>

## **Mary Black's 'Quiet' Poem Drops The Mic On The Subject Of Indigenous Women**

**The Huffington Post Canada | By Jesse Ferreras**

Posted: 02/02/2016 6:38 am EST Updated: 02/02/2016 6:38 am EST

Generations of indigenous people were taught to be quiet. In residential school, staffers would stick needles in the tongues of students who spoke their language, or who opened up about abuse. And that pain lingers with former students who, even today, can't speak up about their experiences.

But Mary Black is sick of the silence. The 23-year-old Ojibwe actress and resource worker from Winnipeg has penned a slam poem, "Quiet," in which she refuses to remain mute about the struggles of indigenous women.

It was posted to her account in October, but its reach has grown to more than 100,000 views in recent days.

The poem, which was written in less than an hour, is performed simply — it's just Black sitting in front of a camera.

But she delivers it with a powerful voice that alternates between quiet intensity and outright anger.

It begins with her saying, "I will not be quiet," and then expands on the suffering of indigenous women.

"Why are 75 per cent of us raped? Why are our houses constantly surrounded by yellow tape?" she intones in one passage.



Mary Black (Photo: Facebook)

Black was inspired to write "Quiet" after seeing reports of spousal violence within Winnipeg — stories about domestic abuse, about women being killed by their ex-partners, she told The Huffington Post Canada.

"It made me so angry to be living in such a violent world," Black said.

And she was inspired even further when she thought about how many indigenous people have been taught to be silent.

"It's a disease to me, to be quiet," Black said. "You see it in the communities, on the reserves, in families and stuff, where if somebody's abused, people will tell them not to talk about it. You don't want to shame the family or cause problems."

## **"It's a disease, to me, to be quiet."**

It's a silence that came from residential school, she said. And it has stopped people from being able to face their abusers today.

"I think our generation is the first that can break this cycle because there's so much to deal with," she said.

"To me, speaking is the only medicine that can cure our souls, because we've been so plagued by this silence and this heavy weight."



Black said "Quiet" marks the first time that she wrote a piece that was completely her own voice. And she's been floored with the support it has received.

People who have suffered abuse themselves have shared the poem, recounting their own experiences for the first time.

She will deliver the poem at "Stolen Sisters," a series of monologues being performed as part of International Women's Week, in March.

The program, which will take place at the University of Winnipeg's Asper Centre for Theatre and Film, will focus on the subject of gender-based violence.

But "Quiet" isn't Black's only poem.

In late January she posted her work "Delicious Slavery" to Facebook.

Black's words come as the federal government establishes an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

The government is currently engaged in consultations with various communities before the inquiry begins its work.

Missing and murdered indigenous woman another issue that Black said people have been silent on for so long. And she's amazed it's being talked about at this level.

"I don't like to make assumptions, but so far what I see is amazing progress with our people, and I have a lot of hope," she said.

"I really hope that we see a time of peace and we get some answers.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/02/mary-black-quiet-poem-indigenous-women\\_n\\_9136020.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/02/mary-black-quiet-poem-indigenous-women_n_9136020.html)

## **Inuk Artist Tanya Tagaq Connects Art With Personal Experience**

Lecture covered impact of forced relocation, residential school, racism, and sexism on creative process



**BY SHREYA GHIMIRE** ON FEBRUARY 2, 2016

Artist, activist, and traditional Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq addressed a full house at St. John's College's annual Marjorie Ward Lecture on Jan. 25, drawing a connection between her work and her heritage.

A prolific artist, Tagaq is a songwriter, filmmaker, and painter. Her most recent album, *Animism*, garnered numerous awards, including a 2015 Juno award and the 2014 Polaris Prize.

The lecture, titled "Arctic Origins: Perspective through Art," discussed Tagaq's personal experiences, her creative process, and how her art is shaped by her Canadian Arctic background.

She began by playing a seven-minute short film called *Tungijuq* and talked about growing up in Nunavut.

Tagaq spoke about the forced relocation of her mother to Resolute Bay, Nunavut, and its negative effects on her family. Forced relocations were common to many Inuit families and communities as the Canadian government sought to establish sovereignty in the high Arctic.

Tagaq also related her experiences leaving Resolute Bay for residential school in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.

She spoke of discovering throat singing in college as part of her healing process after years spent in a residential school. She said it brought her back to a life before colonialism and talked about throat singing as a way of expressing the pains of racism, sexism, sexual abuse, and the horrors of residential schools.

Christopher Trott, an associate professor of native studies and warden and vice-chancellor of St. John's College, said missionaries sought to suppress Inuit throat singing and drum dancing.

"This is colonialism at its most violent," he said. "Only in recent years has there been a revival, especially of throat singing and to some extent drum dancing."

Tagaq, an Inuk woman, is known for her activism against the racism and sexism that indigenous women continue to face in Canada.

Last year's locally infamous *Maclean's* magazine article – **"Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada's racism problem is at its worst"** – cited a Twitter comment Tagaq posted after being followed and sexually harassed by a man while walking to lunch in downtown Winnipeg.

During the lecture, she displayed a list of missing and murdered indigenous women to highlight how life in Canada continues to be unsafe for women like herself and reminded the audience of their collective responsibility to change the statistics.

She finished her presentation with a song.

“She speaks out of her own life experience and she connects the colonial dots for us,” Trott said. “The talk did both of those things for us, but when she sang at the end – and sang from somewhere deep down in her soul – it all connected at a level beyond the intellect and in the gut, at least for me.”

The lecture was held as part of **U of M’s Indigenous Awareness Week**, which featured panels on integrating treaty perspectives into school curriculum and discussions surrounding indigenous credit requirements at the post-secondary level.

“I really enjoyed how genuine, how honest, how truthful she actually was,” said Leanne Deanne, an undergraduate student.

Carl Stone, an advisor at the Indigenous Student Centre, expresses a similar sentiment.

“To be able to speak as frankly as she did, I loved that.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.themanitoban.com/2016/02/inuk-artist-tanya-tagag-connects-art-with-personal-experience/26978/>

## **Coastal First Nations Festival to captivate and foster appreciation of First Nations cultures**

By Willow Fiddler Global News, February 3, 2016 10:24 am



Coastal First Nations Dance Festival.

A former *So You Think You Can Dance Canada* finalist and smoke dancer will headline this year’s Coastal First Nations Dance Festival.

The annual dance festival, a partnership between Dancers of Damelahamid and UBC's Museum of Anthropology (MOA), is a weeklong celebration of stories, songs, and dances of the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast.

Festival artistic director Margaret Grenier said after a decade of festival performance, the event plays a vital role in Vancouver's cultural fabric.

"Each season, we endeavor to assemble a talented pool of emerging and established performers."

These performers are critical to strengthening and upholding the rich cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples, added Grenier.

The festival introduced its headliners as two of Canada's most electrifying performers. Tesha Emarthle will be bringing the smoke dance to the festival for the first time with her traditional style of war dance and lightning-speed footwork.

James Jones is a hoop dancer who has performed and toured with *A Tribe Called Red*, an award-winning pow wow drumming-infused electronic group. Jones was also a 2009 finalist on *So You Think You Can Dance Canada* and he recently performed at the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto.

Artists from across coastal B.C., Alberta, Ontario, Yukon, and Washington State will be featured in a series of evening presentations, afternoon stage shows and school workshops. The festival said the performances will provide a captivating perspective and foster a deep appreciation and understanding for First Nations cultures.

A sneak preview of the upcoming world premiere of *Flicker*, an innovative, mystical performance featuring traditional Coastal masked dance, will also take place during the week.

"We are honored by the opportunity to share such a diverse and meaningful array of First Nations artistic practices in the grandeur of the Great Hall at MOA," Grenier said.

The festival runs March 1 to 6.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2495070/coastal-first-nations-festival-to-captivate-and-foster-appreciation-of-first-nations-cultures/>

## **Of the North: Quebec film festival pulls controversial doc from lineup**

**RVCQ says experimental documentary about Inuit culture is 'source of great controversy' in Quebec**

CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 7:08 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 7:08 PM ET



A still from the mash-up film *Of the North* by Quebec director Dominic Gagnon. The film has been pulled from the RVCQ film festival. (Dominic Gagnon)

The Quebec film festival Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois (RVCQ) has pulled the controversial film *of the North* from its 2016 lineup.

The experimental documentary, directed by Quebec filmmaker Dominic Gagnon, has been called "racist" by some Inuit artists.

Although the film has been screened in festivals around the world, it is a "source of great controversy here in Quebec," said Dominique Dugas, director of RVCQ.

*of the North* is a 74-minute collage film about modern day life in Northern Canada.

It is made up of publicly available clips drawn from internet sites such as YouTube. It's a mash-up of snow, Ski-Doos, hunting and family life, and it also offers a window on industrial development in Canada's North.

In its original version, it included clips of Inuit appearing drunk: wrestling on the floor, crashing an ATV and vomiting. There's also one sexually explicit scene.

The film continued to draw criticism after Polaris prize-winning musician and throat singer Tanya Tagaq threatened legal action. She said her music was used in the film without her permission. Her voice track was ultimately removed.

Dugas said that in spite of the controversy, the initial plan was to include the film in the festival's lineup.

"RVCQ had the objective of not only showing the film, but also organizing, in parallel, a discussion about the film and Inuit culture — to put in place a framework for thinking about the themes addressed in the movie and the portrayal of the Inuit people in films," Dugas said.

"Despite these efforts, it was impossible for us to achieve this, and we therefore considered it preferable to remove the film from the RVCQ's lineup."

*of the North's* director, Dominic Gagnon, has said in a past interview with CBC that he feels he has the right to use videos that people post of themselves online.

He admitted he's never been to the North but said that his critics missed the point of the film. He said it is not about Inuit but about how people film themselves.

He also disputed claims that *of the North* is uniformly negative.

## Film festival ethics?

Some members of the Inuit community are applauding RVCQ's decision to pull the film from the festival, which runs from Feb. 18 until Feb. 27.

"I think the problem is this film portrays this negative stereotype, but it does not give any context. It doesn't educate," said Stephen Agluvak Puskas, a producer for the Montreal-based Inuit radio show Nipivut and a project manager for Nunaliijuaq, a research committee exploring Inuit experiences in Montreal and Ottawa.

"I think a bigger discussion that's not being talked about is the ethics behind these film festivals that show these films," Agluvak Puskas said.

He said he was disappointed the film was screened at other festivals around the world including in Kosovo, Great Britain, Switzerland and New York.

"I think it's because they're capitalizing on the controversy — that this is a film that is really provocative, it induces strong emotions," said Agluvak Puskas.

"Many think that this will get attention, this will get people to come to the film festival," he said. "I really want film festivals to be held accountable for what they show."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/of-the-north-pulled-from-film-festival-1.3432675>

# Aboriginal Business & Finance

## Connections to be made at aboriginal business fair

by [Chris Bush - Nanaimo News Bulletin](#)

posted Jan 29, 2016 at 10:00 AM



Business owners and decision makers will get together over potential contracts and other partnerships at an upcoming First Nations-driven business fair.

Aboriginal Business Match Vancouver Island will be hosted at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre Monday to Wednesday (Feb. 1-3).

Aboriginal Business Match is a growing Canada-wide, First Nations-driven network that currently includes one-third of aboriginal communities and more than 500 companies and is expected to double in size in 2016. Next week's fair will be the first time this event has been held on the Island.

The event brings First Nations and non-aboriginal delegates from across B.C. together in one place. Each delegate sets up as many as 30 or more pre-qualified, 20-minute appointments in a trade show atmosphere.

"A lot of the networking happens in those 20-minute meetings and they have team challenges as well, so a lot of the networking can happen in sort of a casual environment," said Erick Thompson, event spokesman. "One of the things we get from a lot of people who are involved in it is that you can meet with, potentially, people from all over the province all in one place in two and half days, so it can save a lot of travel and a lot of time and you can look at them across the table and see if it's a good match."

ABM Vancouver Island is being held in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation and the Vancouver Island Economic Alliance.

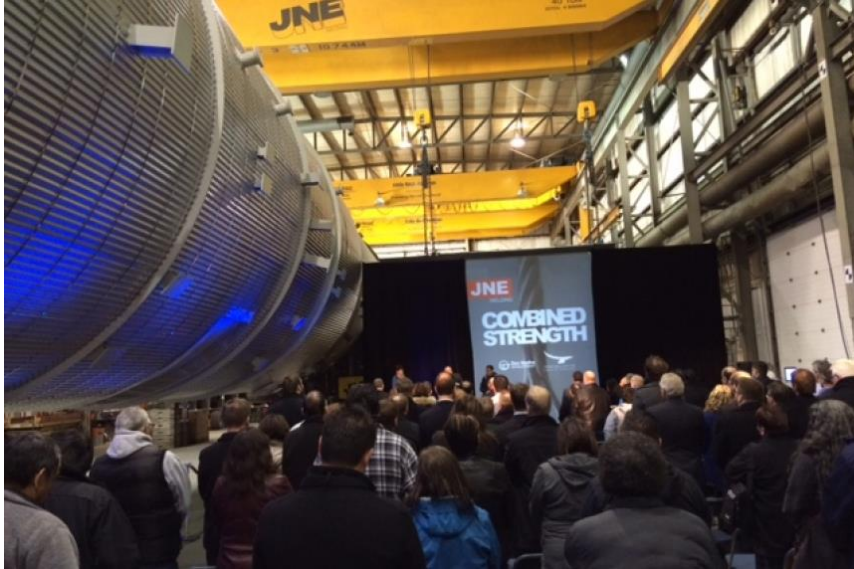
For more information, please visit [www.aboriginalbusinessmatch.com](http://www.aboriginalbusinessmatch.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/366732271.html>

## **First Nations finalize merger with Saskatoon fabricator**

By **Brent Bosker**

January 29, 2016 - 2:03pm Updated: January 29, 2016 - 4:11pm



A Saskatoon steel fabricator and two Saskatchewan First Nations have joined forces.

Today the Peter Ballantyne (PBCN) Cree Nation, the English River First Nation and JNE Welding finalized merger after more than a year of negotiations.

President and CEO Jim Nowakowski said the partnership makes the three companies stronger and more competitive in a tough economic climate.

"We need every angle. We got to address every opportunity and being a First Nation company gives us a leg up as well. So it's really about everybody winning here," Nowakowski said.

The three partners said the merger will benefit Saskatchewan's economy by fostering job opportunities for aboriginal people.

For (PBCN) Chief Peter A. Beatty the deal provides their communities with more economic independence.

"It means I think more opportunity of PBCN to grow. Our revenue streams will hopefully increase. It also means a lot of good opportunities for our cree nation members ."

Together JNE and the two first nation economic development corporations will employ 1,000 people.

**Direct Link:** <http://ckom.com/article/525728/first-nations-finalize-merger-saskatoon-fabricator>

## Local project paying off

*posted Jan 31, 2016 at 7:00 AM*

Three northwestern First Nations are profiting from a local hydro-electric project.

The three, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum here and Lax Kw'alaams on the coast, are receiving modest payments thanks to the Dasque-Middle Creek run-of-river hydro-electric project just southwest of Terrace.

To date the Kitselas have received \$9,200, the Kitsumkalum \$12,000 and the Lax Kw'alaams \$22,700.

All three signed revenue sharing agreements with the province last s June, but backdated to 2012 when construction started.

Originally conceived by a small Vancouver company called Swift Power, the 20MW project is now owned by Calgary energy company Veresen which has a longterm contract to sell power to BC Hydro.

Of the money paid to the province, half goes into general revenue and half into its First Nations Clean Energy Fund and 75 per cent of that latter revenue is then divided up among affected First Nations based on traditional interests on the land on which a project is located.

How much each First Nation receives is based on a provincial formula taking in the population of a First Nation and its distance from a project.

With a larger population, Lax Kw'alaams is receiving just under half of the available revenue with Kitsumkalum receiving nearly 25 per cent and the Kitselas just under 19 per cent.

That leaves just under 10 per cent which would be going to another North Coast first nation, Metlakatla, but it has yet to sign a revenue sharing agreement with the province.

Commercial power production as of this May at Dasque-Middle Creek is later than expected with Veresen at first predicting a date in late 2014.

But low water levels in the fourth quarter of 2014 prevented it from accomplishing a 72-hour performance and reliability test called for in its sales contract with BC Hydro.

Veresen owns or has interests in pipelines, gas processing plants and power generating facilities, including wind, in Canada and the United States.

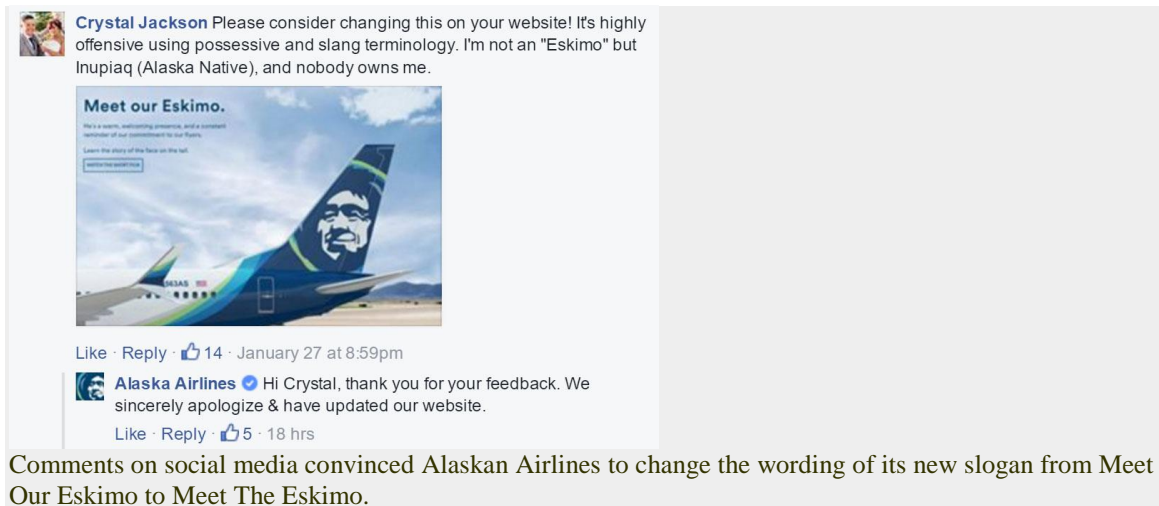
Its main project is a planned natural gas pipeline which would feed a liquefied natural gas plant on the Oregon coast.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.terracestandard.com/news/367110351.html>

# Alaskan airline backtracks on new branding

"I'm not your Eskimo"

SARAH ROGERS, February 01, 2016 - 8:30 am



We're nobody's Eskimo.

That's the message a group of Inupiat or Alaskan Inuit made loud and clear in response to a regional airline's rebranding last week.

Alaskan Air unveiled its new look Jan. 25, which included a new livery and a redesign of its well-known tail art, the image of a hooded Inupiaq who's long been referred to as the Eskimo.

As part of the rebrand, the airline introduced the new design with the slogan "Meet Our Eskimo."

"Our company has a unique personality and a vibrant spirit that our Eskimo has personified for almost half a century," said Alaska Airlines CEO Brad Tilden as part of the Jan. 25 launch.

But that set off a some outrage across the American state, home to about 13,000 Inupiat, some of whom accused the airline of cultural appropriation by implying ownership over the Indigenous group.

Alaskans sent messages to the airline with the hashtag #NotYourEskimo.

“I’m not your Eskimo, @AlaskaAir,” tweeted Alison Warden, an Alaskan rapper who goes by the name AKU-MATU. “I’m Inupiaq.”

The Seattle-based airline, which services communities throughout Alaska, has hosted the iconic image on its aircraft for decades.

But the airline backtracked on its new slogan Jan. 28, issuing an apology to its clients and removing the “our” so it now reads: “Meet The Eskimo.”

“We sincerely apologise and have updated our website,” the airline wrote on its Facebook page Jan. 28. “Thanks to everyone who voiced their concern on this issue.”

Alaska Airlines said all its signage would be replaced to reflect the change.

Although the term Eskimo is more widely used in Alaska and the U.S. than Canada, there has been a more recent shift towards the use of Inupiat or the more general term Alaskan Native.

In Inuit regions of Canada, there is still debate around the term Eskimo and whether or not it is offensive, although communities largely self-identify as Inuit.

Last December, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Natan Obed, asked the Edmonton Eskimos football team to stop using the term Eskimo, a Cree word that means “eaters of raw meat.”

“This issue is about our right to self-determine who we are on our own terms,” Obed said. “We are not mascots or emblems.”

The football organization has agreed to meet with ITK to discuss the issue, although neither has confirmed when that will happen.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674alaskan\\_airline\\_backtracks\\_on\\_new\\_branding/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674alaskan_airline_backtracks_on_new_branding/)

## **Roger Sark honoured by First Nations for work in Atlantic fisheries**

**Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs names Roger Sark the Fisheries Business Person of the Year**

CBC News Posted: Feb 01, 2016 7:46 AM AT Last Updated: Feb 01, 2016 8:18 AM AT



Roger Sark runs the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery and is natural resource director for the Abegweit First Nation. (CBC)

A P.E.I. man is being recognized by the region's First Nations communities for his work in the Atlantic fisheries.

Roger Sark was named the 2015 Fisheries Business Person of the Year by the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs.

Sark said he's been involved in running several programs and projects including the Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery, which aims to replenish the Island's river systems through community partnerships and education.

Sark also works as the natural resource director for the Abegweit First Nation.

"Every year, they bring together the different fisheries co-ordinators of the different aboriginal communities in Atlantic Canada and pay recognition to the work that they're doing," said Sark.

"It felt great. It always feels nice when you get recognition from your peers on the work that you do."

Sark was recognized at a ceremony in Charlottetown last week.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/roger-sark-fisheries-business-person-1.3428227>

## **Canadian government supports Inuit seal hunt**

By Marc Montgomery  
Monday 1 February, 2016

With a massive and ongoing campaign against seal hunting by various activist groups the seal-hunting industry in Canada had all but collapsed in the past several years.



Unfortunately it also took with it a much needed source of revenue and jobs for indigenous peoples in Canada who had always hunted seal for sustenance and clothing. There had been growing interest in products, primarily a variety of clothing made with seal fur to create items from boots and mittens, to vests, coats, purses and others.

After some effort, the European Union, which had banned seal products from being sold in their market, made a provision for allowance of indigenous seal products.

The EU requires that only seal products harvested by Indigenous people and certified by a recognized body are allowed to be sold in the EU.

However, there was no real certification process in Canada, and although Nunavut's government was recognized as a certification authority by the EU, the market now was so weak, that even though indigenous products were allowed, there still was little market for them.

In 2015, the federal government in Canada announced a \$5.7 million programme over five years called the Certification and Market Access Program for Seals (CMAPS)

The idea was to create a certification and tracking system so that seal products created by aboriginals in Canada can be sold to Europe.



July 2015-Nunavut Designer Nicole Camphaug showcases samples of her modern sealskin-covered footwear in her Iqaluit home. It all started with her own pair of neglected boots. 'I was going to sell them, but then I thought, 'Hmm... I'm going to try something.' © John Van Dusen/CBC

In a press release today, Peter Taptuna, Premier of Nunavut was quoted saying, "The EU ban on the import of seal products continues to affect Nunavut sealskin prices. The establishment of CMAPS supports our continued efforts to promote sealing as a sustainable industry, and actively market this important product through the Inuit exemption. It is also an opportunity to strengthen international knowledge and break down barriers to understanding why the sealing economy is so important to our people."

Today an agreement was signed by the federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard and the Premier of Nunavut Territory signed the first agreement in that plan to hand over \$150,000 in federal funds to the territory..

The Government of Nunavut will use the new funds to lead a number of projects in collaboration with the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association and others. These projects aim to increase the amount and market value of sealskin products, reinvigorate the industry overall, and bring awareness and opportunity to Inuit about accessing the EU and other markets.

Currently, the Nunavut Department of Environment is the only Canadian recognized body designated to certify that seals harvested in Nunavut meet the requirement of the EU Regulation.

In announcing the handover of funds, Minister Hunter Tootoo said, "The seal harvest is a traditional way of life for Canada's Indigenous people, and it provides a key source of food, clothes and income for many Inuit families. This financial agreement will help Inuit families to create value-added seal products and it is a key way in which this Government is demonstrating its commitment to supporting northern economic development."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2016/02/01/canadian-government-supports-inuit-seal-hunt/>

## **First Nations need more than accounting**

By: Richard Stecenko

Posted: **02/2/2016 3:00 AM** |

We are all treaty people. We should be anxious, therefore, about the implications of Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett's announcement last December that her department will "cease all discretionary compliance measures" related to the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

The act received royal assent in March 2013 and purports "to enhance the financial accountability and transparency of First Nations by requiring the preparation and public disclosure of their audited consolidated financial statements and of the schedules of remuneration paid and expenses reimbursed to a First Nation's chief and each of its councillors." In addition, the statements must be published on the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs website.

And that's just fine, as far as it goes. But, accountability is not an attribute that exists by itself. For most of us, the sentence "I am accountable" is meaningless bumph.

Accountability is a power relationship between a principal and an agent; the other elements of accountability are the task, accounting and consequences.

The act says nothing about these elements; therefore, I'm taking the liberty.

First, what's the task? The task of government is to improve, or at least not diminish, our health, wealth and well-being. The agents are the chiefs and councillors; but not them alone. I include the civil servants at the Department of Indigenous Affairs, the minister and the cabinet. The whole kit and caboodle should be held to account by citizens. And because we are all treaty people, that means all of us.

Citizens in modern democracies need good information about governmental actions that affect us. Without good information we cannot actively participate in the debate concerning allocations and distributions. Nor can we hold governments to account and punish them when they act irresponsibly or incompetently. The act claims audited, consolidated financial statements, prepared according to generally accepted accounting principles, will enhance accountability.

But are they really good enough?

No.

Luca Pacioli published a 27-page treatise in 1494 describing accounting principles that quickly became generally accepted. Using these principles, modern accountants at every level of commerce and public administration are producing financial statements. The statements for the Coca-Cola Co., the community club at the end of my street and Brokenhead Ojibway Nation all look remarkably alike. The dollar amounts may be recorded as thousands, millions or billions; the descriptions of expenses may differ: sugar, cross-country ski-trail grooming or community wellness. Nevertheless, they all tell the same story: how much money came in, how much went out and whether there was any left over.

These stories are insensitive to context; they are impervious to the complexities that distinguish the Coca-Cola Co. and Brokenhead Ojibway Nation. The Coca-Cola Co. produces and sells carbonated beverages. Sure, it sells lots of them all over the world, but it doesn't run schools, clinics, a housing authority and several commercial enterprises. Financial statements prepared according to Pacioli's technology inform the stockholders of the Coca-Cola Co., but not the citizens of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation.

Therefore, it's good that after Bennett's announcement, First Nations will no longer waste money on audit fees for useless reports. These reports, however, are better than nothing. Furthermore, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling that the federal government is not adequately caring for on-reserve children has established we need more information. Allocations and distributions should be made following democratic deliberation, not according to sterile formulas.

So what to do next?

Here's my suggestion: for the last two years, Treaty 1 First Nations have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on audit fees. Next year, take the money and start training a technologically sophisticated, professional, disciplined cadre of warriors. Send a few to the Asper School of Business or the Schulich School of Business; maybe to the University of Edinburgh's comparative public policy program or the University of Winnipeg's indigenous governance program.

When they return, they will be our auditors and storytellers. They will dig out the details about what the government is doing and dae'b'wae (speak from the heart).

*Richard Stecenko wrote on this topic as part of his studies for a master of arts in indigenous governance at the University of Winnipeg.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/first-nations-need-more-than-accounting-367318781.html>

## **The Way I See It: First Nations band leaders should abide by transparency act**

NICK DAVIES / WHISTLER QUESTION  
FEBRUARY 2, 2016 11:50 AM

I have had my share of acting for or against First Nations during my career.

One case involved a reservation beside the Fraser River. Whoever was responsible for laying out the dykes in the area decided to save a little money by leaving the reservation on the inside of the dyke rather than running the dyke between the reservation and the river. The band was dirt poor — some of their members literally lived in old chicken coops while other members lived in town in warm, modern houses paid for by the band.

A new chief was elected, a woman. She took the bull by the horns and negotiated a real estate development that would have brought cash, jobs and new homes to her band. A group of town members decided they didn't like the proposal. So they got organized and rigged the vote at the meeting called to decide whether or not to proceed. Dishonesty won the day.

Another case involved a band in which every member belonged to one of three families. One family dominated the band politics. They were the only ones living in modern split levels and bungalows. Everybody else lived in shacks. The chief's family held all of the jobs in band administration and on the reservation. They drove nice, new SUVs that the band paid for.

To be fair, the chief and council did provide firewood and Christmas turkeys to their members for many years. Then they stopped supplying free firewood even though most members depended on wood stoves rather than the nice electric heat the chief's extended family all enjoyed. Then to add insult to injury, the chief decided that the band could no longer afford to give its members Christmas turkeys. That is when the proverbial fertilizer hit the fan.

The point is this: for too many years First Nations finances and band governance have been characterized by hubris and greed. I do not go so far as to say they have been dominated by hubris and greed because there have been many well-run bands, but where there is smoke there is fire. Nor can the finger be pointed solely at chiefs and councils.

The Department of Indian Affairs, later called Indian and Northern Affairs Canada or INAC, has been a sinkhole of incompetence and inefficiency in the oversight of First Nations governance and funds.

There was enough money going to the wrong places that the Harper government passed the First Nations Transparency Act. The act requires bands to publicly release their audited financial statements and disclose how much the chief and councillors are paying themselves. Band members could see where their band's money went and taxpayers could see where our tax dollars went.

Carolyn Bennett, the minister responsible for INAC, has said the Liberals will not enforce the First Nations Transparency Act in part because it requires bands to disclose private information about band-owned business and in part because it is unreasonable to force bands to post information online when so many bands don't have Internet access.

This position is wrong. The First Nations Transparency Act is the law. If the government no longer wants to enforce the law, they should attempt to change it and subject the idea to debate in the House of Commons and in the public eye. Rather than using the lack of Internet as an excuse to avoid holding band administrations accountable, the government should do more to get high speed Internet onto reserves.

The way I see it, there has been too much greed and hubris on too many reservations to deny that band governance and financial accountability are problems. First Nations must at the very least be forced to disclose to their membership what they do with their money and they must be forced to disclose to the public what they do with taxpayer dollars.

- See more at: <http://www.whistlerquestion.com/opinion/columnists/the-way-i-see-it-first-nations-band-leaders-should-abide-by-transparency-act-1.2163755#sthash.nNHkHuPB.dpuf>

# First Nations funding reinstated

THOM BARKER / YORKTON THIS WEEK

FEBRUARY 3, 2016 03:55 PM



*"It's always about this discrimination and sorry to say, for me it's racism .... It's discriminatory legislation because no other race is subject to this legislation in Canada except Indian people."*

— *Onion Lake Okinaw (Chief) Wallace Fox*

Controversy has again erupted over the former federal government's First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

At the end of December, Carolyn Bennett, the federal indigenous and northern affairs minister announced the new government was restoring non-essential funding and ceasing court actions against bands that have not complied with the Act.

Currently, Canada's 581 bands are required under federal statute to publish their annual financial statements and disclose the salaries and expenses of their chiefs and council members on their websites. The ministry is also required to republish these records on the Government of Canada site.

The Act remains in effect. What the government has suspended is the "discretionary compliance measures" that allowed the minister to "(b) withhold moneys payable as a grant or contribution to the First Nation under an agreement that is in force on the day on which the breach occurs and that is entered into by the First Nation and Her Majesty in right of Canada as represented by the Minister, solely or in combination with other ministers of the Crown, until the First Nation has complied with its duty; or (c) terminate any agreement referred to in paragraph (b).

Critics say this makes the law toothless.

The Act was extremely controversial at the times it was introduced and passed as at least some First Nations feared it would be used to reduce their federal funding based on band revenues and erode Treaty and Charter rights.

Onion Lake Cree Nation, one of the country's wealthier bands—which owns the Castle



Building Centre in Yorkton—refused to comply and took the federal government to court along with four other Saskatchewan and Alberta bands.

They argued that the bands' monies are not Canadian taxpayers' monies and should not be subject to public disclosure citing the Privacy Act.

"It's always about this discrimination and sorry to say, for me it's racism," said Onion Lake Okinaw (Chief) Wallace Fox. "It's a Constitutional right under Canadian law that under the Privacy Act everyone is protected in the Charter—except for Indian people. It's discriminatory legislation because no other race is subject to this legislation in Canada except Indian people."

Saskatoon Federal Court of Canada Justice Robert Barnes agreed and, in a 24-page ruling issued October 26, 2015, ordered the federal government to cease legal efforts to force disclosure of detailed band finances.

That ruling and Bennett's December announcement has no immediate impact on local bands, all of which have complied with the Act. In fact, only 32 of the 581 bands have not complied for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Critics of the court and government, however, argue disclosure is essential as are penalties for non-compliance.

"This government was elected on a promise to improve transparency and accountability, and this decision does exactly the opposite," said Aaron Wudrick, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF). "A law without consequence for non-compliance is a toothless law. As such, soon many First Nations people across the country will again be in the dark as to how their elected leaders spend public dollars."

Bennett said the Canadian government is committed to transparency, but must work with first nations to achieve it not impose it from above.

"Transparency and accountability are paramount to any government, whether it is municipal, provincial, federal or First Nation," she said in her statement. "We will work in full partnership with First Nations leadership and organizations on the way forward to improve accountability and transparency. This cannot be achieved without the engagement of First Nations and its members."

Barnes agreed with that assessment chastising the former government in his ruling for unilaterally imposing the Transparency Act and a "failure to consult" with First Nations.

"The Crown has an ongoing legal obligation to consult and the minister is required to consider the prejudicial effects of further administrative action on the members of these Band," he wrote. "Those most affected are the members of the Bands and their interests are worthy of careful consideration."

Wallace claims Onion Lake is already accountable to its band members. Following the Court's decision, he explained to APTN that they hold an annual meeting during which all the band's programs are outlined along with all sources of federal funding and band source revenues.

Bennett plans to move forward with consultations.

"I have been asked to undertake, along with my colleague the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and in full partnership and consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, a review of the laws to ensure that the Crown is fully executing its obligations in accordance with its constitutional and international obligations," she said.

"These initial steps will enable us to engage in discussions on transparency and accountability that are based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership and that build towards a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples."

Currently, there are six bands in Saskatchewan that have not complied with the Act including Onion Lake.

- See more at: <http://www.yorktonthisweek.com/news/local-news/first-nations-funding-reinstated-1.2165013#sthash.fcbUoKfv.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Community Development

### **Pond Inlet opens its first soup kitchen with hopes to expand**

**'I think it's making a difference for those who are going hungry,' says volunteer**

By Elyse Skura, CBC News Posted: Jan 28, 2016 2:34 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 28, 2016 3:55 PM CT



Pond Inlet's first soup kitchen began operating this week. It runs at the anglican parish hall from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays, but volunteers hope to expand. (Nick Murray/CBC)

Pond Inlet's Anglican parish hall opened its door to the hungry on Tuesday, offering soup, sandwiches and even a bit of Inuit traditional country food. Even though this is just the first week of the soup kitchen, volunteers already have hopes to expand.

"I think it's making a difference for those who are going hungry," said volunteer Rhoda Nutarak.



Three of the Pond Inlet soup kitchen's volunteers stand ready to hand out sandwiches and crackers. (Submitted by Rhoda Nutarak)

"Our plan is to get our own place so we can establish more meals - at least once a day."

## Committee looks for donations

Last year, the local food bank began planning for the soup kitchen and members of its committee turned to the local hamlet council for help.

"We only had three members at the time and I was kind of getting desperate with how to get funding."

At a meeting, the local representative of Baffin's regional Inuit organization suggested they apply for funding, and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association eventually awarded them \$13,980 through its community initiatives program.

Nutarak hopes to renew that funding, but the group is also fundraising at flea markets and the local grocery store.

The soup kitchen runs every Tuesday and Saturday from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Anglican parish hall.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/pond-inlet-soup-kitchen-helps-hungry-1.3423626>

# Canada's Trudeau visits remote community after deadly shooting

By Reuters

Published: January 30, 2016



LA LOCHE: Residents of the remote Canadian town of La Loche, having softened frozen cemetery ground with bonfires, prepared to bury their loved ones as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrived on Friday at the site of Canada's worst mass shooting in a decade.

Trudeau's visit comes a week after a shooter killed four people and wounded seven at a home and high school and a day before funerals were to begin in the isolated aboriginal Saskatchewan town.

## Four dead in Canada school shooting

"I would like to extend my most heartfelt sympathies to the families of the victims, and I would like to wish a rapid recovery to all those injured," Trudeau said in a statement. "Together, as a country, we join in mourning with the people of La Loche."

Trudeau, elected in October, has pledged to repair relations with Canada's 1.4 million aboriginals, who make up 5 percent of the population but are disproportionately victims of violent crime, addiction and incarceration. Trudeau's visit is expected to focus on both the immediate and longer-term needs.

A 17-year-old boy has been charged in the shootings. Local media said the teen had been taunted about his large ears, and during the shooting spree spared students who had been kind to him.

Two brothers and two teachers were killed in the shooting.

In a note on the Dene high school's Facebook page, staff wrote they missed the students as the school remained closed.

"We are supporting each other so we can help support you. We will be back. We will rebuild. We will get better together," the post read.

La Loche is not an aboriginal reserve but one is nearby. Its population of 2,600 is about 90 percent Metis and Dene, and the Dene language is widely spoken in addition to English.

The shooting has sparked a national debate about how to improve life in communities like La Loche, where the legacy of colonization and an abusive residential school system have fuelled high rates of suicide, addiction, and unemployment, despite nearby oil and resource exploration projects.

### **Chemistry teacher defies Taliban in Bacha Khan University attack**

"It's a big tragic situation right now and it takes this kind of a thing to open our eyes," said Gilbert Benjamin, a relative of one of the shooting victims who travelled from a nearby aboriginal reservation to support the community.

"We've been crying for so many years. We are struggling, we need help and nobody seems to look at it."

**Direct Link:** <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1036883/canadas-trudeau-visits-remote-community-after-deadly-shooting/>

## **Wrong casket shipped to Manitoba First Nation, chiefs call for change**

By Adrian Cheung, January 29, 2016 11:34 am



David McDougall, Chief of St Theresa First Nation and Peter Harper, cousin of Helena McDougall.

WINNIPEG — A family and Manitoba First Nations chiefs are upset with Perimeter Aviation, an airline which holds charter flights to remote Manitoba communities, after a mix up that saw their loved one left behind.

Helena McDougall was originally from Red Sucker Lake First Nation and she died in Winnipeg on January 23. Three days later, her relatives, the Harper Family, flew out of Winnipeg to take her body back to Red Sucker Lake.

While enroute to the community, Perimeter Aviation found out they had instead loaded an empty casket on the flight, while McDougall's casket remained in a Winnipeg hangar.

The Harper family was told of the mistake when they landed and were "devastated", according to a news release sent by a number of communities including Red Sucker Lake First Nation, Garden Hill First Nation, Wasagamack First Nation and St. Theresa Point First Nation.

McDougall's body was flown out later that afternoon.

But communities are calling for change and expressed "their dismay and disappointment with the treatment of the Harper family."

Island Lake First Nations leaders said similar incidents have happened in the past and that they have already spoken about their concerns with management of Perimeter Aviation.

But they say the airline has "recently become lackadaisical and indifferent to concerns brought forth."

Perimeter Aviation has not responded to Global News' calls for comment on the matter.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2486172/wrong-casket-shipped-to-manitoba-first-nation-chiefs-call-for-change/>

## **Scared and Spied On Under Harper, Why Child Advocate Didn't Give Up**

David P. Ball, The Tyee

1/30/16

*Reprinted with permission from [The Tyee](#).*

Fresh from victory at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, Cindy Blackstock said she persisted with her landmark child welfare case for nine years because, "It's our job as adults to stand up for kids."

That, despite spending nine years feeling "tired and sometimes scared because of what the government was doing to me personally," she told *The Tyee*.

That treatment, [according](#) to Canada's privacy commissioner, included spying on her online activities and "surreptitious monitoring" of her public appearances—though the commissioner didn't find the latter actions inappropriate.

On Tuesday, the tribunal ruled in favour of Blackstock's First Nations Child and Family Caring Society—concluding the federal government racially discriminated against 163,000 First Nations children by denying them the same funding for child protection, education and health as Canadian kids.

"It is only because of their race and/or national or ethnic origin that they suffer the adverse impacts," the tribunal [concluded](#) regarding aboriginal children being removed from their families at disproportionate rates, and suffering "service gaps, delays and denials."

The federal government welcomed the ruling and committed to equalizing investments for all children, "not just in terms of money [but] in terms of outcomes," Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould told reporters.

Here's what Blackstock had to say about what kept her going for nearly a decade—and what she wants government to do to "reset" the funding system for First Nations children. Interview edited for clarity and length.

**The Tyee:** You've had a long series of victories, despite the government trying to challenge you at every step and even spying on you, as the privacy commissioner [ruled](#).

**Cindy Blackstock:** That's the good thing when you're just standing up for the truth. Eventually it comes out. We wanted to bring to the public's attention the long-standing inequity First Nations children [face]. The best way to do that is to lay the facts bare before people and let them make up their own minds.

In many ways, this was an opportunity to reset the conscience of the country. We cannot turn our minds away from this and feel comfort because we've heard nice words from the government. We need to keep our eyes on this.

**Could you paint a picture of this inequality?**

The federal government requires First Nations to use provincial child welfare, health and education laws on reserve. But the federal government funds it, while the provinces fund everyone else. Going back decades, the federal government has provided less funding for First Nations children across all those areas: child welfare, health and education.

Before we brought this case in 2007, we worked for over 10 years with the federal government to document the inequalities, to show how they were driving children into care—particularly in terms of a lack of prevention services—and also to come up with solutions. The federal government didn't do it, so we filed the case.



The amount of the shortfall is 22 to 34 per cent depending on the region, and this doesn't take into account the inter-generational affects of residential schools. They're providing far fewer services to keep children safely at home for some of the highest-needs children in the country.

**Under the Harper government, we kept hearing that the numbers were being made up, that First Nations children were not receiving 70 cents on every dollar Canadians got—they suggested it was a product of internal mismanagement on reserves.**

It was ridiculous in the first place. What they didn't say under that regime is that, in these legal proceedings, you're allowed to call expert witnesses. They hired KPMG accounting firm to go over our calculations of the shortfall—but unfortunately for the government, KPMG agreed with us. We actually filed the federal government's expert report on our side of the case. They couldn't find one expert witness to confirm what they were saying.

**You say you felt confident in the truth, but it doesn't always win out in the courts. In your case, was there any doubt in your mind? Did you have a sleepless night in the lead-up to the ruling?**

When I heard it was coming, I was both relieved, joyful and a bit nervous. I wasn't so nervous in terms of the facts, because it was so overwhelming. I saw through all 72 days of those hearings and read 80,000 internal documents; I would have been shocked had it gone any other way.

But what is the government going to do with it? I expected the government would come out and say that they welcomed the decision. But that doesn't change children's lives. Where the government has repeatedly fallen down over the last 148 years when it comes to First Nations children is implementing the solutions that would make a difference. That's what I'm waiting for.

**If there were three steps the government could take immediately to reset this, what would they be?**

We have on our website [ways](#) they can fix the formula and relieve the suffering for these 163,000 children right now, while we work on longer-term solutions.

Number one, they could provide prevention services in their funding formula... to keep families together. They could release that money.

Number two, they could implement Jordan's Principle, which means that First Nations children can access government services on the same terms as other kids. What's been happening up until now is there's buck passing, particularly between Health Canada and Indian Affairs about how should pay for services for kids.

There was a four-year-old little girl who went in for dental surgery. Something went horribly wrong and she was given equipment to deal with respiratory issues the doctor

said she required. Health Canada and Indian Affairs argued [over funding] for well over a month.

**It echoes the original case that led to Jordan's Principle—Jordan River Anderson, a five-year-old with a rare muscular disorder from Norway House First Nation in Manitoba.**

He spent over two years unnecessarily in a hospital, and sadly died there [in 2005] because governments couldn't agree on who should pay because he was a First Nations child. We saw repeated examples in the evidence before the tribunal that this is still going on. I know of cases right now where that's going on.

The other thing they need to do is implement all the things on our website. They're not just my ideas—they're recommendations jointly agreed to by the government before to fix the problem that they've never done. They haven't committed to these things yet. We all need to be vigilant and watch the government for what it does.

**Five or 10 years in the future, is there something you'd like to see that's fundamentally different—other than obviously ending the funding gap—in the way governments approach First Nations children on reserve?**

That they really believe in the ability of communities to make the best decisions for kids. We have a process called [Touchstones of Hope](#) that brings together the very best Western child welfare practices and resurfaces traditional [Indigenous] ways of caring. When it come down to it, child protection is really about how well we can support communities to assume that responsibility for looking out for kids at a grassroots level. I'm hoping we see a lot of investment in that particular area.

The other thing is that we need to address poverty. The vast majority of First Nations children go into [government] care because of poverty and poor housing. The United States is a step ahead of us here: there are 17 U.S. states and the District of Columbia where the child welfare statutes expressly say that you cannot remove a child for poverty. As Minister Bennett said the other day in her response: "If there's no food in the fridge, you get some food in the fridge... not take the kid away."

**What's carried you through and kept you going since 2007? Was it discouraging at times?**

The families were my inspiration. Hearing stories like that four-year-old little girl—how could you give up? It's our job as adults to stand up for kids. Absolutely I was tired and sometimes scared because of what the government was doing to me personally. But I realized that it's my job to stand up for that four-year-old and for kids like Jordan. I'm thinking that a lot of Canadians are shocked to learn about these inequalities and will be standing with us too.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/30/scared-and-spied-under-harper-why-child-advocate-didnt-give-163248>

## Winnipeg writer, indigenous rights activist Don Marks dies

**Marks, 62, died due to complications related to liver disease, roommate says**

By Bryce Hoyer, CBC News Posted: Jan 30, 2016 3:59 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 31, 2016 7:21 AM CT



Don Marks, who has written two books about aboriginal athletes and the challenges they face, died Saturday. (Karen Pauls/CBC)

Winnipeg writer and indigenous rights advocate Don Marks has died.

Marks passed away Saturday morning at the Health Sciences Centre due to complications with liver disease.

Ken Macdonald, Marks's friend and roommate of nine years, said the 62-year-old had been on-call waiting for a liver transplant at the time of his death.

Marks was a "huge Jets fan and huge Bomber fan," made forays into documentary filmmaking and wrote about issues facing Canada's indigenous community, Macdonald said. Much of his professional life sought to marry his passion for sports with a desire to tell the stories of struggle experienced by indigenous people in North America.

Marks worked as the editor of *Grassroots News*. Prior to that, he worked at Global News as a sportscaster and eventually developed a friendship with CKND-TV owner Izzy Asper.

Asper went on to fund Mark's documentary *They Call Me Chief: Warriors on ice*, which profiled indigenous hockey players in the NHL and the barriers they had to overcome to make it to the league, MacDonald said.

Marks later turned that television special into a book, which sold thousands of copies and took him around the country on book tours, Macdonald added.

"He took all the notes and hundreds of hours of tapes that he had and he wrote a book," Macdonald said. "He got a writer's grant from the province and *They Call Me Chief* went on to become a Canadian best-seller."

In the summer of 2014, Marks published another book in the same vein called *Playing the White Man's Game*, which looked at indigenous pro-athletes across North America.

He won a Gemini award in 1998 for the CBC documentary series *Man Alive* and took home an American Indian Film Festival Spirit Award for *Indian Time*, a CTV variety show. Marks was also given a Manitoba Human Rights Achievement Award in 1993.

He grew up in the North End of Winnipeg. At a young age, Marks ran away from home and was eventually adopted by an indigenous family, Macdonald said.

"Don believed in fighting for the rights of indigenous people," Macdonald said. "A lot of people thought he was aboriginal but he wasn't."

Marks was also a war-resistor when Ronald Reagan was in office, going so far as to sue the former president at the time for the United States' role in several wars, Macdonald said. He ran for the Liberals once in the North End but failed to win the nomination, Macdonald added.

## Health took a turn

The health issues that led up to his death started in the middle of 2014 and took a more serious downward turn in September of 2015, Macdonald said.

"He realized that his only way to live was to have a transplant," Macdonald said, adding Marks' health continued to decline into the winter.

On Dec. 1, Marks' liver failed. He remained hospitalized up to the day of his death.

"His spirits were that his doctors and his health-care people around him were the best in the world," Macdonald said, adding Marks was committed to holding on as long as possible.

"The people at the hospital said that they'd never seen a guy go through as much as he went through."

Marks had also become a frequent opinion columnist for CBC Manitoba over the last few years. Here's a short list of some of his stories:

- **OPINION | Manitoba parents, not kids, should be removed from troubled homes**
- **OPINION | 'Sensationalist' Maclean's article product of 'news tourism'**
- **OPINION | Conrad Black's history of Canada: Arrogant, misinformed and disgraceful**

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-writer-don-marks-dead-1.3427132>

## Moose Hide hits home



*By Breanne Massey  
Pioneer Staff*

Domestic violence is an issue that hits home for many people around the globe, but the Moose Hide Campaign is hoping to put an end to it by urging men to take a stand against violence for women and children.

Debra Fisher, who serves as both the Columbia Valley Metis Association (CVMA) president and Shuswap Indian Band's (SIB) education co-ordinator, has begun distributing small square moose hide pins to the community to honour the cause and help it gain traction within Canada.

"It's an awesome initiative because it's men-driven," said Ms. Fisher. "I think it's both important and impressive that men want to end violence against women and children, and I'm challenging the Columbia Valley to help spread the word."

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men who are standing up against violence towards women and children. Those who support the cause believe that wearing this piece of moose hide signifies their commitment to honour, respect and protect the women and children in their lives; while working together with others to raise awareness about domestic violence.

The Moose Hide Campaign began in Victoria, B.C. but the B.C. Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres' goal is to spread the Moose Hide Campaign to organizations, communities, and governments throughout Canada.

Ms. Fisher has hand delivered 300 pins to the members of the Metis Nation B.C. at the annual general meeting, the Akisqnuk First Nation and the Shuswap Indian Band. She is planning to request additional pins to continue distributing them in the Columbia Valley.

“I’m going to order some more and I’m thinking about dropping it off at the District of Invermere (DOI) to challenge the community to wear them,” said Ms. Fisher, noting others could contact her by e-mail to secure Moose Hide Campaign pins.

In addition, Ms. Fisher has challenged Roxane Baalim (her sister, who is a retired RCMP officer and now is responsible for operating Victim Services for Alberta) to promote the Moose Hide Campaign in Alberta.

“We want to spread the word, so if anybody’s interested in wearing moose hide to support the cause, they can contact me directly,” said Ms. Fisher.

Contact Ms. Fisher at 250-688-5096 or [education@shuswapband.net](mailto:education@shuswapband.net). To learn about the Moose Hide Campaign, visit [www.moosehidecampaign.ca](http://www.moosehidecampaign.ca).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.columbiavalleypioneer.com/?p=17188>

## Adam Wood made wherever he was a better place



**Kaitlyn Watson**

Submitted Photo

*Kaitlyn Watson, January 2016*

Uxbridge Times Journal

By Kaitlyn Watson, Jan 31, 2016

Adam Wood’s death in La Loche hits close to home. We were classmates at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay during our teacher training. I did not know Adam was from Uxbridge and was surprised when I met him up north, realizing that there were two of us from this same small town in southern Ontario all the way up in Thunder Bay. And, I myself have considered going to teach in remote First Nation communities.

Four years ago I submitted a letter to the editor at this same newspaper about the high rate of suicides among young people on First Nation reserves in northern Ontario. These were common announcements on the radio in Thunder Bay, something Adam would have been attuned to, which prompted me to write the letter. I made the point that if students were dying like this in Uxbridge, the town would be up in arms. Unfortunately, it has



taken the heart-breaking death of an Uxbridge resident for others in our community to have their eyes opened to the living conditions of those living in the north, especially in poverty-ridden reserves.

Talking with another friend who teaches up in La Loche only a few weeks ago, I learned about the teaching and learning conditions there. Poverty is rampant; the trauma of residential schooling continues to haunt the community; and a lack of resources for teachers and other professionals to address these concerns results in a continued cycle of sadness, desperation, and depression among young people and adults.

Of course I do not mean to minimize the horrific act of the shooter. What happened to Adam and the three other victims cannot be forgotten. However, we must remember that this event is only a small part of a long legacy of colonial violence perpetrated against First Nation peoples. After nine years, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal finally ruled on Jan. 26, 2016 that the federal government discriminates against First Nations in the area of child welfare.

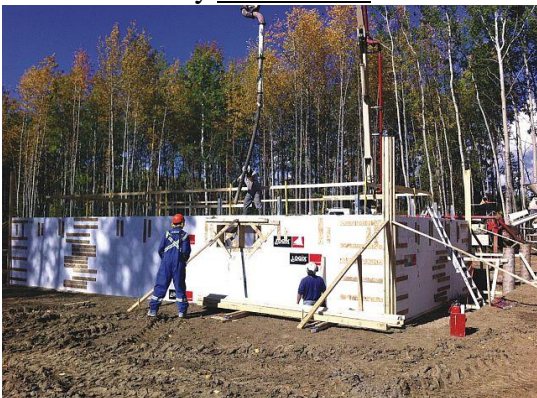
To Adam's family, I am truly sorry for your loss. I remember how Adam was always smiling and his friendly character. I can be sure that during his time in La Loche, Adam had a positive impact on those he met — which is all we can ask of educators.

*Kaitlyn Watson, from Uxbridge, is a PhD candidate in the faculty of education at Western University.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.durhamregion.com/opinion-story/6254914-adam-wood-made-whenever-he-was-a-better-place/>

## **SPOTLIGHT – Metis settlements welcome new housing with volunteers needed**

2016-01-31 · by Admin2015 ·



Construction of one of the houses at Gift Lake Metis Settlement that started last fall.





Another style of bungalow duplex at East Prairie Metis Settlement with the exterior shell complete.

### ***Richard Froese Spotlight***

Much-needed new housing is under construction in East Prairie Metis Settlement and Gift Lake Metis Settlement with Habitat for Humanity as volunteers are being recruited to cut costs.

“Housing is a real serious problem here at East Prairie, we have a lack of housing,” says Gerald Cunningham, chairperson of the settlement council.

“We really haven’t had much in finances as a settlement to build houses.”

Homes for six families continue under construction with three duplexes, which various styles, with work expected to be complete by summer, Cunningham says.

“Through partnerships between Habitat for Humanity Edmonton, Metis Settlements General Council, East Prairie Metis Settlement, Gift Lake Metis Settlement and the Government of Alberta, members of the East Prairie and Gift Lake will be able to own a home on the settlement,” says Alfred Nikolai, president and CAO of the international, non-governmental, and nonprofit organization, which was founded in 1976, a self-described “Christian housing ministry,” that addressed the issues of poverty housing. Construction actually started last summer in East Prairie for three duplexes of various styles and last fall in Gift Lake for six single detached houses.

“We are looking forward to the homes being completed,” says Gift Lake council chairperson Howard Shaw.

“We haven’t had new housing built in our settlement for years.

“There is a need for housing on the settlement, just like in other aboriginal communities, and there is currently no program in place.”

Cunningham notes that the Metis Settlements General Council plans to establish its own housing authority to add more housing under the same guidelines as Habitat for Humanity.

The housing organization is delighted to be part of the project to help the settlements with a crucial need.

“This partnership will result in affordable home ownership for six deserving Metis families on each settlement,” Nikolai says.

“Many hours went into addressing current legislation and policy for the program in order to come to an agreement and we’re proud of what has been accomplished.”

With projects at various stages of construction, co-ordinators are seeking volunteer to work on the sites as a way to cut expenses.

“Cost of a Habitat project is relative to the number of volunteers and donors for each project,” Nikolai says.

“HFHE is currently recruiting volunteers to finish constructing the homes so that the families can move in this summer or as soon as possible.”

Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age.

All training, tools, and safety equipment is provided by HFHE.

Anyone wishing to volunteer in East Prairie may phone Delores Peterson at 780-316-9313, and for Gift Lake, phone Linda McLeod at 1-587-283-0690.

All homes are currently at the rough-in stage, and we anticipate that the homes will be completed this summer, with the families moving in once the homes are complete.

Partner families purchase the homes from Habitat for Humanity with 500 hours of sweat equity (volunteer work) and then pay an interest-free mortgage with payments that do not exceed 25 percent of their household income.

Habitat homes do not come furnished (with the exception of a stove and refrigerator).

Families take pride in making the home “their own” and furnish it accordingly, Nikolai says.

The local projects began when settlement councils applied to the Metis Settlements General Council (MSGC), which has eight Settlements in Alberta.

Applicants were reviewed and awarded by a selection committee of the general council.

Families were selected by Habitat for Humanity by applications, with a set of standards, that the household income range from \$25,000-\$90,000, with at least one child under-18 living in the home.

**Direct Link:** <http://smokyriverexpress.com/spotlight-metis-settlements-welcome-new-housing/>

## **Winnipeg Facebook group offers safe rides to aboriginal women**

**Jackie Traverse says group started because of some cab drivers' rude behaviour**

CBC News Posted: Feb 01, 2016 12:30 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 01, 2016 10:02 PM CT



Jackie Traverse decided she had to do something after hearing story after story about aboriginal women dealing with racism or rude behaviour in Winnipeg taxis.

Traverse, an artist, turned to social media, creating "Boycott all Winnipeg Taxi Companies" and "Ikwe (Women helping women safe ride)" pages on Facebook on the weekend.

Ikwe is a ride-sharing group that so far has close to a dozen women signed up to give rides.

Traverse said she's had her own issues with cab drivers, and she's heard more and more stories from other aboriginal women.



Jackie Traverse started the Facebook page Ikwe (Women helping women safe ride) because too many aboriginal women face racial profiling or outright violence in cabs, she says. (CBC)

"They're rude to us, they demand payment as soon as we sit in or they yell at us, they think we don't have money. They feel we're all trying to rob them or ditch out on the cabs," said Traverse, 46.

Crystal Anderson said she, too, has had similarly racially-charged experiences taking cabs in Winnipeg. Anderson signed up to be a volunteer driver with the group because she wants to provide indigenous women with an added sense of safety.

"Some of these women don't have help, so I want to just pass it on, pay it forward and let them know that there is people out there [who] care," she said.

## **Trouble getting a cab**

Beyond the issues indigenous women face once they arrive in some cabs in the city, Traverse said sometimes it's challenging to even get a cab in the first place.

"No cab would take me. I was walking down the street with my money out in my hand trying to find a cab, to show them that I had money. Sometimes that's the only way a cab will stop is if you hold your money with both hands in front of you. So I ended up walking home, which took me an hour, and it was really bitterly cold that night. Twenty cabs must have driven by me that night, and I couldn't get a cab," Traverse said.

There was some talk of creating a taxi service for aboriginal women only, or an Uber-type service, but it was too expensive, Traverse said.

"We don't have money to do things. What about Safe Ride? Ride Share? That's not illegal. People carpool every day," Traverse said.

She has not contacted the Taxicab Board or other regulatory bodies about what such a ride service would require.

"I'm done with asking for permission to look after our women. We shouldn't have to ask for permission to look after our own. I don't think there's a legal thing with offering a ride. How could that be illegal?" Traverse said.

Payment would be worked out between the driver and the passenger. Traverse said it could range from money for gas to a coffee to \$5 to \$10 per ride.

## **Neechi Rides**

The movement comes shortly after Pernell Flett started a safe ride service for indigenous people.

Traverse said she appreciates what he is doing, but one person isn't enough, and some women might not want to take a ride with a stranger.

"It's mainly women because I wanted it to be a woman's page, because we want to keep our girls safe. We know the percentage of women who are going missing, women and girls that are going missing on the streets. We want to try and keep our women safe."

David Sanders, chair of the Manitoba Taxicab Board, said last week that he has heard a number of sexual harassment complaints and drivers' licences have been suspended. It's an issue the board takes seriously, he said, adding he encourages riders to lodge formal complaints.

## 'We want indigenous women to feel safe'

Luc Lewandoski with the Winnipeg Taxi Alliance agrees, adding he takes concerns raised by Traverse and others seriously.

"We want indigenous women to feel safe whenever they take a cab," he said.

"We know when it comes to the indigenous populations, there's been members of the community that have met with the Manitoba Taxi Cab Board. The Winnipeg Taxi Alliance certainly would be open to meeting as well, and it's something I think that we're going to pursue over the next couple of weeks, partially stemming from the recent activity and the recent stories."

Drivers are updating training on handling accessibility issues in the next year, and that's an opportunity for the Taxicab Board to sensitize drivers to the issues specifically faced by indigenous riders, Sanders added.

A meeting is being held at the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre at 445 King St. to discuss the issue of taxis at 7 p.m. Monday.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-indigenous-women-cab-harassment-rideshare-1.3428759>

## Manitoba First Nations Homes Mouldy, Overcrowded, Would Cost \$2B To Fix

CP | By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Posted: 02/01/2016 9:44 am EST Updated: 02/01/2016 9:59 am EST

**THE CANADIAN PRESS** 

WINNIPEG — Internal government documents say Manitoba First Nations live in some of the most dilapidated homes in the country and it will cost \$2 billion to eliminate mould and chronic overcrowding in that province alone.

That's almost 13 times more than the \$150 million the federal government has budgeted for housing on all reserves across Canada this year.

Reports from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, obtained by The Canadian Press under access-to-information legislation, say the housing situation in Manitoba has worsened as infrastructure funding has been siphoned off to other areas.

"As a result, Manitoba First Nations continue to face further deterioration in infrastructure," says the internal report dated January 2015.

"Current estimates indicate a \$1.9B need to address existing overcrowding, replacement and major repairs related to mould and substandard conditions of housing units. Key challenges continue to include affordability, low income and high social assistance rates."

The report notes Manitoba has among the highest percentage at 29 of indigenous people living in poor housing in Canada. Officials say Alberta is the only other province in a similar situation.

One quarter of existing homes on reserves in both provinces need to be repaired or replaced.

Chief David McDougall said the situation is a "ticking time bomb" in his remote aboriginal community of St. Theresa Point in northern Manitoba. The waiting list for housing on the cluster of four reserves in his tribal council is 1,500. Last year, his reserve got 18 units.

They were the lucky ones. Other reserves got less than that.

### **Overcrowding common**

It's not uncommon for 18 people to live in a small bungalow, McDougall said. Last year, there were 23 people living in a two-bedroom home.

"They had to take turns sleeping."

While the government's own estimates put Manitoba's housing needs at \$2 billion, the department said \$50 million is budgeted for on-reserve housing in the province this year.

That is to drop to \$29 million next year.



*Chief David McDougall of St. Theresa Point said the situation is a "ticking time bomb." (Photo: CP)*

Some reserves can build additional homes with a ministerial loan guarantee, but McDougall said that isn't available if the reserve is under third-party management. The department's internal report said only 30 per cent of Manitoba reserves operate independently.

People on McDougall's reserve are losing hope, he said. Suicides are on the rise while others turn to a homemade alcoholic concoction called "superjuice."

The federal government spent the last few years hooking up the reserve's homes to water and sewer, but McDougall compared that to putting new tires on a rusty, decrepit car.

"We need to find a proper, sustainable solution — what is realistic in terms of how we can begin to even make a dent in this huge backlog."

### **Minister: Homes 'a disgrace for Canadians to watch'**

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said she's not deterred by the \$2-billion price tag. She couldn't explain exactly how the new Liberal government will tackle the backlog, but said improving First Nations housing is a priority.

"I've been in those homes," Bennett said in an interview. "It is a disgrace for Canadians to watch. There is a consensus in this country that we have got to get going on this.

"The sticker shock on any of these things can't get in the way of us beginning what has to happen."

Ottawa has been warned before about the housing situation on Manitoba reserves. A 2011 internal assessment of on-reserve housing said communities don't have the means to maintain the homes they have, which often require "aggressive maintenance."



*Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett. (Photo: CP)*

"The consequences are manifold: maintaining housing stock is costly, poorly maintained housing is unsafe and contributes to poor health, which in itself generates additional costs," stated the report.

An evaluation three years before found people on reserves were living in homes that were "falling apart" and rife with mould, which made them "not suitable for people with breathing problems." It noted two people died in one community "related to wiring and lack of heat. People were using a dryer to help heat a home."

Craig Makinaw, Alberta regional chief with the Assembly of First Nations, said the situation is dire for some First Nations. While some reserves with a source of income can afford to go above and beyond government funding, residents on other Alberta reserves wait up to 30 years for a home, he said.



"All the cuts that have happened over the years have caused this backlog," he said. "It needs to be addressed because it's not going to get any better."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/01/2b-to-fix-dilapidated-first-nations-homes-in-manitoba-alone-government-report\\_n\\_9129534.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/01/2b-to-fix-dilapidated-first-nations-homes-in-manitoba-alone-government-report_n_9129534.html)

## **Ahousaht First Nation helps keep Coast Guard rescue operations afloat**

**SUNNY DHILLON**

The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Feb. 02, 2016 10:01PM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Feb. 02, 2016 10:03PM EST

When the whale-watching vessel Leviathan II capsized near Tofino in October, the first boats to respond were operated by members of the Ahousaht First Nation.

The band is no stranger to water rescues. When a float plane crashed two years earlier, an Ahousaht resident was first at the scene. Two people died, but four were saved.

In the case of the Leviathan, six of 27 people on board were killed. But band members were heralded for preventing the death toll from climbing even higher, and their response prompted calls for a more formal role for First Nations in Coast Guard operations, including training opportunities.

The Canadian Coast Guard says it is still working on a plan to include First Nations in the search-and-rescue process, but the Ahousaht First Nation was recently invited to take part in a two-day training session.

Alec Dick, the band's emergency co-ordinator, said the session – which included representatives of the Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue, the RCMP and others – was a good first step.

"Getting together shouldn't happen after the fact, after the disaster," Mr. Dick said in an interview. "We should work together, maybe on a quarterly basis, just to know exactly where we are."

Clay Evans, superintendent of maritime search and rescue with the Canadian Coast Guard's western region, said First Nations play a crucial role in such operations.

"Coastal First Nations are a key component, because they're on the front line and the remote areas of the coast. It makes sense to make them a part of the system in terms of training and exercise," he said in an interview.

A Coast Guard spokesperson said the training offer was made to the Ahousaht First Nation after the Leviathan incident.

A Coast Guard official met with the Ahousaht chief and council to award a commendation and extended the offer at that point.

Supt. Evans said the training session was held last Thursday and Friday. The first day was spent in the classroom and included safety and communication procedures. The second day was spent on the water and involved a scenario in which the parties searched for overdue kayakers.

“They’re localized search-and-rescue operations where we bring all the key players together that would be on the water during a search-and-rescue incident,” Supt. Evans said.

“So it’s kind of as much about getting all the players together so that everybody knows who the other faces are and the voices over the radio.”

Mr. Dick said he is already thinking ahead to future sessions and will be working on a plan in that regard in the coming weeks. He said the communication procedures that were discussed on the first day were especially helpful, as the band has had trouble reaching the Coast Guard over the radio in the past.

On the second day, Mr. Dick said the Coast Guard worked to make the scenario as realistic as possible and it was. There were even dummies to play the role of the kayakers.

“It was raining, cold, and a little bit of a breeze on the water. But all in all, it was a really, really good scenario that they put together. It was something that brought that working relationship closer,” he said.

Mr. Dick said the band, in addition to the training, could use some assistance with search-and-rescue equipment and plans to move forward on that front.

“Fortunately, over here we have a lot of boats, but some of them are not meant to be out on rescues. We do need help in having some rubber rafts, such as the Coast Guard have, but we’re going to be working toward that and applying to government,” he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/ahousaht-first-nation-helps-keep-coast-guard-rescue-operations-afloat/article28530115/>

## **Passing of Harold Greyeyes; legacy in First Nations agriculture**

STAFF / BATTLEFORDS NEWS-OPTIMIST  
FEBRUARY 4, 2016 10:59 AM



An active and distinguished member of the local First Nation community in the Battlefords has passed away.

Harold Greyeyes died Jan. 31 at the age of 86. He leaves behind his wife Estelle and his family. A farewell wake was held Wednesday in North Battleford.

Greyeyes had a long history of active involvement, but his biggest contribution was in agriculture.

He was born on Muskeg Lake reserve in 1929 and started in agriculture at an early age, working on the family farm in the area. Later, he also worked in the lumber industry in British Columbia. He moved to North Battleford in the mid-1970s.

His lasting legacy in agricultural was his work as an educator and a communicator, particularly in promoting better agricultural practices to those on reserves.

For 22 years he worked for the Saskatchewan Indian Agricultural Program as an assistant extension agrologist, and earned two farm management certificates and an artificial insemination technician certificate from the University of Saskatchewan during that time.

He developed a number of agriculture workshops and courses aimed at First Nation farmers and earned a reputation as a tireless promoter of First Nation agriculture in the region.

Greyeyes was also active in the media. He wrote a column for the Battleford Telegraph and also for the First Nation Free Press. For a time he also did a Cree agriculture broadcast on radio.

From 1975 on, Greyeyes was a member of Rotary and was the first treaty person to serve as president of the local club. He was named a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow in 1985 and later served as district governor.

Greyeyes was also part of a citizens advisory committee with the RCMP, was a director with the Saskatchewan Agriculture Food Council, was active with the Battlefords Union Hospital Foundation and was also a director with the Battlefords Chamber of Commerce for a decade. He has also been involved with the Battlefords Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

He was an avid golfer and was North American Golf Champ (seniors) in 1980, 1981, and 1982.

In 1992 Greyeyes was named to the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame.

See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/passing-of-harold-greyeyes-legacy-in-first-nations-agriculture-1.2165502#sthash.PJLVXz8Z.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

### **B.C. First Nations elderwoman mauled to death by dog, prompting coroner's investigation**

**THE CANADIAN PRESS** | February 1, 2016 12:58 PM ET



Postmedia FilesA B.C. First Nation is mourning the loss of an elderwoman mauled to death over the weekend.

KAMLOOPS, B.C. — Members of the Tk'emlups First Nation near Kamloops are mourning the death of an elder attacked and killed by a dog.

Seventy-eight-year-old Kathleen Green was mauled to death at her home on the southern interior reserve Saturday night by a dog that was tied up in the backyard.

Emergency crews called to the scene had to shoot the dog because it continued being aggressive as they arrived.

Coroner Barb McLintock says fatal dog maulings are very rare and many questions must be answered.

She says the investigation is just beginning and the Coroners Service must do a lot of work to determine exactly why Green died.

The victim was a residential school survivor and lived with her grandson, and the dog belonged to a family member.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/b-c-first-nations-elderwoman-mauled-to-death-by-dog-prompting-coroners-investigation>

## **First Nations student deaths inquest: What we know now**

### **Inquest into the deaths of 7 First Nations students in Thunder Bay moves into phase 2 on Monday**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Feb 01, 2016 6:45 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 01, 2016 7:03 PM ET



The seven students who have died in Thunder Bay since 2000 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

A coroner's inquest in Thunder Bay, Ont., moves on to testimony from expert witnesses on Monday after hearing months of evidence detailing the deaths of seven First Nations students in the city.

The inquest is examining the deaths of Jethro Anderson, Curran Strang, Paul Panacheese, Robyn Harper, Reggie Bushie, Kyle Morriseau and Jordan Wabasse.

All of the students came from remote First Nations to attend high school in Thunder Bay. They died between 2000 and 2011.

The first phase of the inquest began in October with the death of each student being examined individually. The second phase begins on Monday with 12 days of testimony from experts who are expected to put the students' experiences into context for the jury.

The final phase of the inquest in March will include closing addresses, instructions to the jury and their recommendations for keeping youth from remote First Nations safe in Thunder Bay.

Here are five things that have been revealed since October:

### **1. No one knows how five First Nations teens ended up in the water**

The bodies of five of the boys who died were found in rivers that flow through Thunder Bay.

Four of the boys were drinking in the company of other students near a river when they were last seen, but none of the witnesses who testified at the inquest could say how any of the boys came to be in the water.

In regards to Kyle Morriseau, whose body was found in the McIntyre River in 2009, coroner's counsel Karen Shea told a witness: "We've heard a lot of evidence and I think we all agree that no one knows how Kyle got into the river."

Jordan Wabasse, whose body was found in the Kaministiquia River in 2011, was last seen more than two kilometres away from the river, near his boarding home. None of the witnesses could explain why he would have been near the river.

### **2. Investigations into two of the deaths remain open**

Thunder Bay police revealed that their investigations into the deaths of Kyle Morriseau and Jordan Wabasse remain open.

Police records show both cases as "complete, solved, non-criminal", but Insp. Don Lewis testified that both cases remain open, although not actively investigated.

### **3. Friends, family say none of the teens intended to harm themselves**

The inquest must decide whether the cause of each of the deaths is suicide, homicide, accidental or undetermined.

In each case, witnesses have been asked about the outlook and attitude of the student in the weeks and months before their death.

None of the witnesses have identified any suicidal behaviour in the students.

For example, Curran Strang, who died in 2005, was described by his boarding home parent as "a very nice young boy, very out-going, easy to talk to, always joking."

#### **4. Several of the students had contact with police in the months prior to their deaths**

Nearly all of the students who died had interacted with Thunder Bay police outside of school hours. At least two of the students spent time in custody for underage drinking in the weeks leading up to their deaths.

A lawyer for Thunder Bay police said the police service is reconsidering how it deals with intoxicated students.

"It raises a broader issue which is identifying young people at risk," Brian Gover said. "That's something that we need to take away from the inquest in particular and learn as much as we can about it."

#### **5. Missing persons reports for several of the students contain errors**

The Thunder Bay police missing person report for Jordan Wabasse identified the wrong date for when he was last seen.

Curran Strang was identified on the missing person's report as a "frequent runaway," while Jethro Anderson's missing person's report said the 15-year-old had an alcohol dependency after his aunt told police she had caught him drinking once before.

The inquest resumes on Monday morning.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-what-we-know-now-1.3425793>

## **Police need culture change to ensure indigenous treated fairly: Trudeau**

Trudeau told a CBC forum Sunday night that a "pervasive culture" in police forces, governments and religious communities has led to indigenous people being less valued.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told a CBC forum Sunday night that "indigenous lives matter" and he promised major changes will be made in Canada's relationship with indigenous people.

**By:** The Canadian Press, Published on Sun Jan 31 2016



OTTAWA—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says a culture is needed within Canadian police forces to ensure indigenous people are treated the same as everyone else.

Trudeau told a CBC forum Sunday night that a “pervasive culture” in police forces, governments and religious communities has led to indigenous people being less valued.

He said that culture must be changed and he predicted the push for change will come from the Canadian people.

The CBC event involved Trudeau taking questions from a number of people — picked by the public broadcaster — who queried the prime minister on a wide range of topics including the economy, terrorism and relations with aboriginal people.

He spoke about the plight of indigenous people in response to questions from a woman whose aunt went missing in Vancouver and whose cousin went missing in Kamloops, B.C.

Trudeau said “indigenous lives matter” and he promised major changes will be made in Canada’s relationship with indigenous people.

He said some of those changes will take years, and in some case decades, but he vowed that life will get better for aboriginal people.

Trudeau said the first order of business will be to fulfil his promise of an inquiry into murdered and missing aboriginal women that will hear from everybody involved, especially the victims’ families.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/31/police-need-culture-change-to-ensure-indigenous-treated-fairly-trudeau.html>

## **First Nations student deaths inquest: Is the treaty relevant?**

**'The treaty says the government will provide schools and teachers' salaries', expert testifies**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Feb 02, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 02, 2016 7:13 AM ET



Etienne Esquega, lawyer for the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, argued the treaty is the 'foundation' of the issues being considered at the First Nations student deaths inquest. (esquegalaw.com)

Talking about treaty rights at an inquest into the deaths of First Nations students in Thunder Bay, Ont., might confuse the jury, according to the presiding coroner.

The inquest is examining the deaths of seven young people from remote First Nations who were in Thunder Bay to attend high school, in part because of limited access to secondary schools in their home communities.

Coroner Dr. David Eden interrupted questioning of a witness at the inquest on Monday when Etienne Esquega, the lawyer for the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, began asking about treaty rights.

"How does this line of questioning assist the jury in making recommendations?" Eden asked Esquega after the jury had been excused.

Luke Hunter, the director of land rights and treaty research with Nishnawbe Aski Nation had previously testified about educational provisions in Treaty 9 and Treaty 5, which cover the territory from which the students came to Thunder Bay.



Dr. David Eden told jurors at an inquest into seven First Nations student deaths that it's not their job to decide on treaty obligations. (David Eden/Linkedin.com)

"If you read the text of the treaty it says that the government will provide schools and teacher's salaries," Hunter said.

Treaties are disputed in law and have not been ruled on by the courts, Eden said, so the jury could be confused if Canada or Ontario enter contradictory evidence.

"This inquest will not be resolving disputes relating to treaty obligations... it's not something on which the jury can make a finding," Eden said.

"With all due respect, there are 23 First Nations that make up NNEC [Northern Nishnawbe Education Council], all of them are relying on this treaty as the primary source of that right to education," Esquega responded.

"This is not simply going to the Lakehead public school board and saying we need more money for more teachers," he added. "That's not there. This is rooted in all this evidence we're hearing right now."

When the jury returned, Eden told jurors that he had instructed lawyers to make a "distinction between that which is set in law and that which is not decided" when asking witnesses about treaties.

That's a challenging distinction to make without undermining his clients' fundamental beliefs, said the lawyer for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

"My clients do not think they need a court to tell them what is their treaty right that their ancestors signed," Julian Falconer said.

The inquest continues on Tuesday with testimony from Lakehead University's vice-provost of aboriginal initiatives, Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux and Thunder Bay police Deputy Chief Andy Hay.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-is-the-treaty-relevant-1.3429476>

## **First Nations student deaths inquest: 7 things police want**

**Thunder Bay police want access to information sheet, photos of each First Nation student in city**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 03, 2016 6:45 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 4:13 PM ET



Thunder Bay police suggested several potential recommendations to jurors at the inquest into seven First Nations student deaths in the city.

Thunder Bay police outlined the recommendations they'd like to see made by jurors at the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in the northwestern Ontario city. Deputy Police Chief Andy Hay testified at the inquest on Tuesday, saying police have already made changes to policies and procedures as a result of the student deaths.

For example, Hay says internal communications were improved after police noticed **a "lag time" of six days in the reaction of its criminal investigations branch** after 15-year-old Jethro Anderson was reported missing in 2000.

The inquest into the deaths of seven young people from remote First Nations who came to Thunder Bay to attend high school is expected to wrap up in March.

Here are seven recommendations Hay said Thunder Bay police would like to see come out of the inquest:

### **1. Timely reporting of missing persons to police**



Thunder Bay Police Deputy Chief Andy Hay

There is no waiting period for reporting someone missing to police.

Hay says the "trigger point" for getting police involved in a search for a missing student is "if there's a parent, a teacher, a boarding parent or counsellor that is concerned" and actively searching for the student themselves.

## **2. Indigenous representation on the police services board**

Hay says the last time he remembers there being an indigenous person on the governing board for Thunder Bay police was a man named Philip Edwards in the early 1990s.

(Edwards was among the earliest advocates of a public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women).

## **3. An 'advocate' to act as a liaison between police and First Nations families involved in tragedy**

Hay says communications between the police and First Nations families from remote communities is "fraught with missed connections".

He says having a recognized advocate working with families, and protocols around privacy, would help improve the flow of information to the appropriate family members in times of crisis

## **4. Increased access to personal information about students**

Hay says police would like to see First Nations schools produce "information sheets" about each student that would be available to police.

The sheets could include photos, names of friends, contact information for family members and addresses for social media accounts, Hay says.

"This is not something police want to house," Hay says, adding the information would only be used by police for missing persons cases and not "general investigations."

Hay would also like to see the inquest jury support proposed "stand-alone" missing persons legislation that would allow police to breach privacy regulations, gaining access to medical records or GPS trackers on smart phones of people reported missing.

## **5. Training for First Nations volunteer searchers**

Hay says the efforts of First Nations members to find missing students are "really appreciated" by police, but there is a "danger" that they could inadvertently interfere with evidence.

Police would like to see an "educational component" for community searchers about the risks of disturbing evidence.

## **6. A single liaison person from First Nations schools in dealings with police**

"If we have a missing person we need to be able to have a contact person that we can flow our information to, and access information from, in that organization," Hay says.

## **7. A partnership with LCBO to identify 'runners'**

Several former students have testified about paying an older person in money, cigarettes or alcohol, to purchase alcohol for them when they weren't old enough to buy it themselves. Students call the people who provide the service "runners".

Hay says a police partnership with liquor stores could help identify people who make "unusual" purchases such as several mickeys of different kinds of alcohol.

"If kids want to get it, they're going to find alcohol somewhere," Hay says. "We're never going to eliminate it, we can only curtail it."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-7-things-police-want-1.3431101>

## Indigenous women fastest-growing inmate population in Canada, says report

BY

**CORY COLLINS**

| FEBRUARY 4, 2016



The disproportionate representation of Aboriginal people in Canada's prison population has **recently been brought back to attention** by Howard Sapers, the Correctional Investigator of Canada.

Over 25 per cent of federally sentenced inmates are Aboriginal people, he says. Yet only 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population is Aboriginal, according to the **2011 National Household Survey**.

More than 36 per cent of women in federal prison are Aboriginal -- representing the fastest growing inmate population in Canada -- and 48 per cent of federal inmates in the Prairies are Aboriginal. Federal corrections centres hold offenders who are serving sentences of two years or more in length.

Sapers' concerns have brought renewed scrutiny to the relationship of Aboriginal people to Canada's justice system and the conditions faced by Aboriginal offenders. This came

days before a Saskatchewan **shooting** in the largely Aboriginal community of La Loche which constituted the worst school violence in Canada since 1989.

Sapers pointed out, in a phone interview with rabble, that the reasons for the disparity and its increased growth are complex and fall outside of the mandate of his office, but nevertheless emphasized the importance of understanding and addressing multiple causes both outside and within the justice system.

"Our focus is really on what happens during the administration of a sentence, not focused on the issues that brought people into conflict with the law. That being said, of course, a big part of corrections is to prepare people for release and to live law-abiding lives. And one of the ways that you do that by dealing with those issues that did lead them into their criminal lifestyle," Sapers said.

Sapers identified the past citing of colonialism, residential schools and the **Sixties Scoop** as contributing factors. Equally, Sapers highlighted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) **report** and its findings regarding systematized discrimination and chronic suffering related to addictions and lack of education and employment opportunities.

"These are men and women. They are not defined by the worst thing they ever did at one point in their life. They are defined by the sum total of all of their experiences. And sadly, for many Aboriginal Canadians, those life experiences are full of trauma, both immediate personal trauma and also intergenerational trauma."

The Trudeau government has stated its intent to implement the TRC's **recommendations** as well as the Kelowna Accord, an **agreement** reached in 2005 that was meant to improve socioeconomic conditions of Aboriginal people.

### **Worse numbers for women**

Kim Pate, the director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, speaking to rabble in a phone interview, echoed Sapers' concerns and highlighted some of the particular impacts on women, including clients.

"Unfortunately, we're not surprised," Pate said when asked about her reaction to learning about the increased growth in Aboriginal incarceration. "This is something we have been monitoring as well and have been raising concerns about -- the fact that Aboriginal women, particularly those with mental health issues, are among the fastest-growing prison population in this country."

Pate went on to identify the impact of the elimination of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) as a significant factor in worsening economic conditions for women.

"The ability, then, for provinces to cut resources to social services, health care, education spending, all of that has contributed to putting women in a more marginalized position than they were, even historically. So although we have legal equality, we don't have economic, social or -- what we refer to as -- substantive equality."

The CAP was **replaced** with the Canada Health and Social Transfer in 1995, changing the nature of transfer payments to the provinces, though the CHST itself was split into two components in 2004.

"[I]ncreasingly, social needs, economic needs are ending up causing people to be in such marginalized conditions that they may be victimized and/or criminalized. That's particularly true for Indigenous women," said Pate.



She continued, "So we've seen, for instance, people being jailed essentially because they're homeless, people who are literally begging in the streets or requesting services being accused of harassing people or worse, they may be accused of robbery or those sorts of things. We've seen women working the streets, particularly Indigenous women, who, after performing a sex act for which they were solicited, when they request the money they may then be accused of trying to rob someone.

And, as many of the women I know would say, the reality is, once they're in that situation, who gets believed is not them."

Pate went on to highlight the impact of violence against women, expressing that Aboriginal women who defend themselves or defend others from violence are more likely be charged or plead guilty without justification. She also reflected on the role of crime legislation passed under the previous government.

Crime laws passed under the Conservatives included provisions that imposed mandatory minimums sentences and removed the possibility for house arrest in certain offences. It also changed the system of pardons and temporarily ended double credit for time spent in pre-trial custody.

"The reality is that so many of the reforms have resulted in increased and more punitive sentences," Pate said, expressing that they have made it more difficult for former inmates to integrate once released.

### **Corrections-specific areas for improvement**

Past reports from Sapers' office have highlighted an array of issues that contribute to the high rate of Aboriginal incarceration and have included numerous recommendations that have yet to be implemented.

Sapers has emphasized that, for example, that parts of legislation governing corrections in Canada, including elements directly related to Aboriginal communities, have never been fully implemented.

The ombudsman has highlighted Sections 81 and 84 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, which were meant to provide for provide for **healing lodges** and give Aboriginal communities a defined role in helping offenders re-enter society. The lodges are correctional facilities that provide cultural programming and appear to reduce re-contact with the justice system. But these parts of the law have been almost unknown.

"There's only been a half a dozen of these agreements signed in 20 years. And [there are] very few beds being operated by Aboriginal communities under this law," Sapers told rabble.

"When those provisions were brought in in 1992 there was no effort made in the initial instance to ensure that Aboriginal communities knew about them," Pate said, continuing "...It was ludicrous to think that the excuse for life not being breathed into that portion of the legislation was that no communities came forward."

Sapers has also called for a deputy commissioner in Corrections Canada that would be specifically responsible for Aboriginal corrections, **re-iterating** his past recommendation in November when the Liberals first came to power.

When asked if he had expectations that such a commissioner would actually be put in place, Sapers joked, "I never have expectations, I avoid a lot of disappointment that way."

"We've made the recommendation and we believe its an important one, that the executive of the Correctional Service of Canada should include an assistant commissioner

responsible for the Aboriginal initiatives. ...We think it's too important just to be part of someone's job. We think it needs to have focused leadership and we think that that will bring a different level of accountability when we're talking about progress on these issues," Sapers said.

Pate agreed that a deputy commissioner could have a meaningful impact within the corrections system.

"It's been recommended for some time. We would argue that if they do set that up, the person should have line authority," Pate said, later adding that the analogous position, the deputy commission for women's corrections, lacks line authority and therefore control over prison wardens.

"[T]hey should have the ability to actually directly influence what happens within the prison setting for Indigenous persons. If they don't have line authority, then likely whatever they recommend will be ignored."

**Direct Link:** <http://rabble.ca/news/2016/02/increased-growth-aboriginal-incarceration-must-be-addressed-canada>

## **James Bay winter road bringing drugs, alcohol into First Nations: grand chief**

**'The only people that really get the good out of this issue are the bootleggers'**

CBC News Posted: Feb 04, 2016 2:06 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 04, 2016 2:06 PM ET



'That's the unfortunate part of having a winter road. The alcohol ratio goes up,' says Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon. (Fred Chartrand/Canadian Press)

Bootlegging has become a concern for a First Nations grand chief near James Bay after police recently discovered a vehicle packed with beer and liquor travelling through a new ice road.

The First Nations of Attawapiskat, Fort Albany, Kashechewan and Moosonee have become accessible by car during the winter thanks to the opening of the 300-kilometre ice road, which is only open for a short time.

Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon represents the First Nations along the route and told CBC News controlling the flow of drugs and alcohol along the route is difficult.

"It's a known thing because you know anybody can come to Moosonee during the day. They have more access. That's the unfortunate part of having a winter road. The alcohol ratio goes up," Solomon said.

Last week, Nishnawbe-Aski police discovered a vehicle packed with beer and liquor on the winter ice road.

"The only people that really get the good out of this issue are the bootleggers. They are the ones that pocket the money," Solomon said. "To me, they don't really care about anybody. All they care about is the money that's handed over to them. They don't know what they're causing. Family break ups, assaults, homes being broken into."

While it is now easier to move people and supplies in the area, the road is also challenging to monitor.

Soloman noted the alleged criminals often wait until the early morning hours to make the trek because there's less traffic on the road. Police are conducting random spot checks along the route.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/james-bay-winter-road-1.3433647>

## **Aboriginal Education & Youth**

### **Dreams for aboriginal children different?**

By: Mia Rabson

Posted: **01/28/2016 4:53 PM**

OTTAWA — Standing on the stage of the National Press Theatre Tuesday, among national and regional indigenous leaders, was a young girl, the daughter of a chief.

The chiefs held a news conference to respond to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision that Canada has discriminated against First Nations children for decades because of inferior child-welfare services on reserves.



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde looks on as First Nations Child and Family Caring Society executive director Cindy Blackstock speaks about the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling regarding discrimination against First Nations children in care during a news conference in Ottawa on Tuesday.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde said the girl was there to represent children.

At one point she was called to the microphone to speak, and her mother ushered her forward. She was so frightened — what child wouldn't be facing news cameras and reporters? — her voice was barely a whisper as she thanked First Nations Child and Family Caring Society head Cindy Blackstock and the Assembly of First Nations for fighting for kids.

I do not know this girl, but after she stepped back from the microphone, I couldn't help but watch her for a few moments.

I wondered what she was thinking and what her dreams are.

I wondered how much she knew, that simply because of where she is from and what she looks like, she will face barriers in her life most Canadians will never know.

A First Nations baby in Canada today is twice as likely to grow up in poverty as a non-aboriginal baby born in the same hospital. He is 1.5 times more likely to never see his first birthday, and his overall life expectancy is five to seven years shorter.

He will be five to seven times more likely to attempt suicide, and if he lives on a reserve, 31 times more likely to get tuberculosis.

And if he does get the chance to grow up, he is more likely to end up in jail than to graduate from high school.

Those are dire statistics.

And they say nothing about the barriers a First Nations child faces in a country where racism is so blatant, even the federal government is willing to spend millions of dollars in court so it doesn't have to treat First Nations kids the same as other children.

That is what Tuesday's decision was about.

It wasn't about saying First Nations people should get more than others. It wasn't even talking about treaties or the constitutional obligations Canada has to First Nations — which have never been lived up to.

No, this is a blatant example of discrimination. Full stop.

Simply because they live on a reserve, First Nations families have been given less than everyone else.

Blackstock, the former social worker and indigenous leader who led the fight to get Canada to do right by indigenous children, said she is hopeful Canadians will stop being allowed to believe indigenous people get more.

Because you know that's what lots of people say and think all the time.

Canadians love to get outraged at the idea someone else might be getting something they're not. Well, then you should get outraged about the fact that for decades Canada knowingly shortchanged vulnerable kids whose families needed help.

Help such as counselling, parenting classes, even help buying some groceries or paying the electric bill, all to keep families together. If you live on a First Nation, the only time your kids got the same funding as everyone else is when they were taken away from you.

Yes, you read that correctly.

Sadly, underlying the comments about handouts to First Nations people seems to be a racist, inherent belief that First Nations parents are less worthy of being Mom and Dad. That something about being indigenous makes them love their kids less.

It is one of the most offensive things I have ever heard.

Canada got a wake-up call this week in the form of the tribunal decision.

No longer can we pretend we don't treat indigenous people differently. No longer can we decry the historical wrongs against First Nations people as the actions of the past, things not done by you or me or anyone else around today.

"This discrimination toward these 163,00 kids is happening on your watch," Blackstock said.

"Today is the day we end racial discrimination as a fiscal-restraint measure in this country," she said.

Let's hope she is right.

*Mia Rabson is the Free Press parliamentary bureau chief.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Dreams-for-aboriginal-children-different-366910991.html>

## **Coaching program boosts Edmonton Catholic First Nations grad rate**

JANET FRENCH

**Published on: January 28, 2016 | Last Updated: January 28, 2016 7:15 PM MST**

Haley Bayne used to stand, agonizing, outside the door of Archbishop O'Leary High School's graduation coach.

"Should I go in, or should I not go in?" the Grade 12 student wondered, all too aware of passing students' glances.

Hearing her classmates' racist jokes, she didn't want them to know about her indigenous roots.

"I felt like I was dirty. I felt like I shouldn't be native," said 17-year-old Haley.

Now, on track to convocate and hoping to be a pediatric nurse, she says graduation coach Donita Large was instrumental in her success.

"She's definitely like a mom."

Since its introduction in 2009, the Braided Journeys graduation coach program has kept more indigenous kids in school and helped drive up Edmonton Catholic Schools' graduation rate for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

In 2010, when more than three-quarters of Edmonton Catholic high school students were graduating within three years of starting Grade 10, just 28 per cent of indigenous students were earning a diploma on time.

Now offered in three high schools and three junior highs, plus an outreach program in Westmount, 40 per cent of indigenous students are donning a cap and gown within three years, and nearly 58 per cent have a diploma in hand after four years of high school. Slowly, the gap between indigenous students and non-aboriginals is narrowing.

“We needed to do something differently. What we were doing wasn’t working,” said Pamela Sparklingeyes, the school division’s program manager of aboriginal learning services.

Braided Journeys began at St. Joseph High School in 2009, then expanded to St. Francis Xavier, Blessed Oscar Romero and Archbishop O’Leary in the next few years. (St. Joseph’s program has since changed.)

Last September, the school division added coaches to three northeast junior high schools.

Unlike other programs aimed at winning the interest of struggling teens, graduation coaches make a full-time job of catching students at risk of drifting away from school.

“Some teachers, they just slap a textbook on your desk and say, ‘Learn this,’ and walk away,” Hayley said.

Once a storage room, O’Leary’s Braided Journeys room has morphed into a student lounge of sorts, with computers, tables, a fridge and microwave, and board games like Pow-Wow-Opoly.

Large checks up on how students are doing in their classes, talks to them about their career plans, and helps them choose courses they’ll need as prerequisites. Once a social worker and a residential schools adviser for a law firm, Large also helps teachers include lessons about colonization and treaties into their classes. She keeps sage handy for smudge ceremonies.

She also invites students to cultural and community events, and encourages them to volunteer.

Most importantly of all, she’s just there to talk.

“I needed a job that brought me some hope,” Large said. “I love this job.”

Students say their classmates in the program feel like a family — and not just for indigenous students.

In the 2013-14 school year, 96 per cent of the students who saw a grad coach stayed in school.



Students and graduation coach Donita Large (third from left) in the Braided Journeys program hang out in the program room at Archbishop O’Leary High School. Students get school and career counselling, participate in volunteer and cultural programs, find comfort, and make friends through the program.



Sixteen-year-old Tori Costa, who is Portuguese, said she was drawn to the welcoming environment and the chance to volunteer — reading to elementary school students, sorting donations at the food bank, and serving Christmas dinner to people in poverty.

Keisha Laboucan found a sense of belonging she craved. After moving to Edmonton in Grade 11 from High Prairie, she felt lost, misunderstood, and overwhelmed.

The room was a quiet place where she could focus on her schoolwork.

She overcame her self-doubt and graduated last fall. Laboucan is preparing to enrol in business administration or management at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. She feels like people will take her more seriously when she has a diploma or a degree.

“I do strongly believe if I hadn’t found this program, I would have struggled a lot more to get my graduation diploma.”

**Direct Link:** <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/coaching-program-boosts-edmonton-catholic-first-nations-grad-rate>

## Equity for aboriginal children long overdue

Postmedia Network

Sunday, January 31, 2016 7:00:39 EST PM



Cindy Blackstock (R), executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society Caring Society, speaks during a news conference regarding a ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal with Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde in Ottawa, Canada, January 26, 2016.

Even though the federal government spent the past nine years and more than \$5 million fighting Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society over discriminatory funding of child welfare services on First Nation reserves, the ruling last week by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal was no surprise.

The tribunal found that, although the needs on reserves are usually greater, the federal government has failed to provide the same level of services that exist elsewhere, saying it "acknowledges the suffering of those First Nations children and families who are, or have been, denied an equitable opportunity to remain together or to be reunited in a timely manner."

The impact has been starkly evident as aboriginal children constitute a depressingly high proportion of children placed in government care. Federal parsimony is also evident in such moves as cutting funds for provincially delivered programs to First Nations, for example, a Saskatchewan program that prepares developmentally delayed children for school.

Blackstock provided the tribunal with disturbing stories of children who were denied access to vital medical equipment that would have enabled them to remain with their families. This was often the result of bickering between governments, contrary to the Jordan's Principle adopted by Parliament that says indigenous kids should have the same timely access to services as other children without delays caused by jurisdictional disputes.

Contrary to the obstructionism that has been Ottawa's response for nearly a decade, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett suggest the government has no plans to appeal the ruling.

The cost of remedies, compensation and programs could in the hundreds of millions and provoke criticism in an era of national economic woes, but money saved by discriminating against helpless children is no saving at all.

While the tribunal's decision covers child welfare services on reserves, the ruling doubtless will extend to federal funding of other First Nations programs and services. While Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to remove the cap of two per cent on funding increases, the considerable gap in education funding between reserve students and provincially funded counterparts remains.

Fixing the inequities will be expensive, but innocent children have paid the price for too long.

-- *Postmedia Network*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.stratfordbeaconherald.com/2016/01/29/equity-for-aboriginal-children-long-overdue>

## **Consultation on future of Cree bilingual school draws hundreds**

MORGAN MODJESKI, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: January 29, 2016 | Last Updated: January 29, 2016 8:06 PM CST



Parents and community members can be seen at the gym of the St. Frances Cree Bilingual School during a recent community consultation held earlier this week. Here parents had the chance to provide insight into what they would like to see for the future of the school, while getting insight from the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools on the board's plan for expanding the facility moving forward.

Discussions about the future of Saskatoon's St. Frances Cree Bilingual School drew a large crowd earlier this week.

According to school division staff, a community consultation held at St. Frances on Wednesday drew about 350 people eager for information about the school's future, and provided insight into what they would like to happen at the Cree bilingual school in future.

The school, which is currently at 140 per cent utilization, has experienced rapid growth in recent years. Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools superintendent Gordon Martell called the turnout for the consultation "overwhelming."

"We had approximately 150 parents in attendance and we had over 200 children in attendance as well," he said. "It was an amazing turnout and the community filled that very small gym."

Martell said as children participated in cultural performances, including a presentation by a traditional hoop dancer and an indigenous flute player, parents were provided an overview of the program at St. Frances, a breakdown of student demographics and growth, and some insight into the school's plan for the future.

Parents were then asked to answer three questions: What are some limitations of the current St. Frances school, what do you think of proposal to the Saskatchewan government for a major renovation or addition at St. Frances, and how can parents and the community help achieve goal of a renewed facility at St. Frances Cree Bilingual school?

Martell said they're currently compiling the information collected at the consultation into a report that will be presented to the Catholic school board in the upcoming weeks.

Judging from the comments he heard at the event, he feels the response was positive, he said.

“The community was very appreciative of being informed about what the board has done on their behalf in terms of pursuing an upgraded facility,” Martell said, noting the GSCS has a role to make sure the community is informed and that their voice is sustained.

“(On Wednesday) we had hundreds of people come together and say, ‘We are aware of the issues with the facility at St. Frances, we aspire to have an improved facility, we like the program, and the building needs to catch up,’ ” he said.

Renovations at St. Frances are considered a top priority for the school division, which has requested \$16 million from the provincial government.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/coonsultation-on-future-of-cree-bilingual-school-draws-hundreds>

## **Maple Ridge wrestler hopes to teach solid life skills to aimless Cree youths**

**BY SUSAN LAZARUK, THE PROVINCE JANUARY 31, 2016**



Andy Bird, right, poses for a photo with A.J. Charles, a cousin from Saskatchewan whom he is helping.

Andy Bird had two dreams growing up in a family of four kids headed by a single mom with a physical disability: Becoming a professional wrestler and helping the people on his reserve in northern Saskatchewan.

Bird, who lives in Maple Ridge and wrestles professionally part-time in his trademark dreadlocks as Andy “The Dreadful” Bird, says he’s checked off the first box and now is ready to tackle the second.

Bird is a member of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation, three-and-a-half hours north of Saskatoon and not far from La Loche, the scene of last week’s multiple shooting at the local school, a tragedy that made his dream of helping youth even more urgent.

“That’s only a few hours away,” he said.

Bird, 26, was born in nearby Prince Albert and then moved to Saskatoon, before heading to Calgary to become a wrestler with little money and no definite plans. He came to B.C. by invitation to train with wrestling mentor.

Bird now is married and lives with his wife in a basement suite, where his mother is also living at the moment, in a group of homes occupied by his wife’s immediate family and their family.

“It’s real communal living,” said Bird, a bundle of fast-talking energy on the phone.

And his dream is to grow the commune.

He hopes to raise money for the “Bird’s Nest,” a house where young adults from his reserve can come to live temporarily and learn the life skills that he says on which they’re missing out in Montreal Lake. The reserve is home to about 1,300 members, 600 of them children, and there’s one store, a church, a school and not much else, he said.

Bird said the area is beautiful but there’s no hope for post-secondary education, jobs or a productive life on the reserve, and the young aren’t motivated to go to high school, let alone university or a trade school. Alcohol and drug abuse is common.

“When I went there to give a talk, there was only one Grade 12 student on the entire reserve,” said Bird, the grandson of elder Allan Bird, for whom the reserve school is named. “There’s a 35-per-cent graduation rate. That’s heartbreaking to me.”

He said his dream is to eventually offer young adults who’ve graduated the chance to live in the Bird’s Nest in Maple Ridge while they learn how to apply for courses or jobs, open a bank account, create a resumé, learn how to drive, prepare for interviews — all the life skills he said they’re not getting on the reserve.

“I was this little Indian boy from Saskatoon, Sask., and I was able to just up and leave and go to the big city and I’m living my dream now. I was exactly like they are. That’s exactly what I want to show them. I’ve had the life experience and I can show them they can, too.”

Bird has brought out his cousin, A.J. Charles, 21, whose story includes finding the body of his brother after his on-reserve suicide.

Charles is living with Bird’s mother- and father-in-law while he studies to be a hairstylist with plans to eventually return to Saskatchewan to open his own salon.

Bird said another young adult was about to give up on life until he heard how Bird is thriving.

“He said he wants to be just like me,” said Bird, who’s enrolled in the sport science program at Douglas College and is also taking courses at Ridge Meadows College to work as a special-education teacher. “It makes me want to cry. We saved this guy’s life.”

Bird said he needs to raise \$26,000 to cover six months’ rent for a five-bedroom house to open Bird’s Nest and has launched a website and a Facebook page.

And he and the promoter he normally fights for, Elite Canadian Championship Wrestling, are staging Wrestle-Fest, a fundraiser at the Greg Moore Youth Centre in Maple Ridge on Feb. 27.

As band members, the youth would be eligible for living and education allowances.

Bird had hoped to tap into some government financial support for the house and won’t give up trying.

“But we realize we’ve just got to raise the money ourselves,” he said. “These kids — they want to come out right now.”

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.theprovince.com/technology/maple+ridge+wrestler+hopes+teach+solid+life+skills/11688450/story.html>

## **Aboriginal grads join push to help peers embrace higher learning**

Raigelee Alorut, an Inuit grandmother, is among the aboriginal university grads joining a campaign urging indigenous people to get a higher education.



Raigelee Alorut, an Inuit grandmother, is among a group of aboriginal university grads who are part of a campaign sponsored by the Council of Ontario Universities to get fellow aboriginals to embrace higher learning.

**By: Louise Brown** GTA, Published on Tue Feb 02 2016

She was an Inuit high school dropout living in Iqaluit, near the Arctic Circle. Her English was rusty, and she didn’t know what an essay was.

Little chance Raigelee Alorut would ever graduate from the University of Toronto with a bachelor's degree in aboriginal and Caribbean studies.

But she did — and now jumps to describe how European explorers mistreated both the Inuit and peoples of the Caribbean. She slams Martin Frobisher as the Christopher Columbus of the north.

She's a convert to higher learning, and she's just begun. The 51-year-old who now lives in Toronto, teaches Inuktitut and throat-singing while she and her husband care for two grandchildren, has applied to U of T to do a master's degree in education.

Alorut is one of 13 indigenous Canadians who have gone to university and are highlighted in a public awareness campaign to urge others to defy the odds and do the same. They have made 30-second video pitches in the campaign, to start Tuesday, sponsored by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU).

"If I can do it, anyone can; no matter how hard it seems," said Alorut as part of COU's "Let's Take Our Future Further" campaign.

While there are 6,500 aboriginal students now at Ontario universities and thousands of aboriginal alumni, only 9 per cent of Ontario aboriginal residents have a university degree, compared with 23 per cent of non-aboriginal people. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has called education the key to addressing the injustices faced by indigenous Canadians.

"I want to send a message that more Inuit should take university and college," said Alorut. "Never give up."

Several of those featured in the videos, including Alorut, thank campus aboriginal student centres for helping to bridge the cultural and academic gap they faced.

Kelly Campagnola is an aboriginal law graduate from South Porcupine, east of Timmins, Ont., and works as assistant manager of External Legal Services for the TD Bank. She recalls that "being surrounded by other students who were in touch with their culture helped me to quickly realize how unfortunate it was that I had not been proud of my Métis ancestry growing up. It gave me the confidence to get involved in activities and to seek teachings from elders."

Donna Kimmaliardjuk, from Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, is believed to be Canada's first female Inuit cardiac surgeon. She felt isolated when she first arrived at university, "but I found a new family and community among the friends that I met, and the Aboriginal Student Centre on campus played a particularly big role in this."

Liz McLeod, from Moose Factory, Ont., is doing a master's degree in kinesiology at Wilfrid Laurier University and calls the aboriginal centre on campus "my second home." She is studying how to improve insoles in shoes that make seniors less likely to fall.



“This will also help the public see aboriginals as contributing to the larger community — how many people would think there’s an Inuit cardiac surgeon?” noted Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, director of Aboriginal Student Services at U of T and part of the COU working group responsible for the awareness campaign.

“Lack of role models is one of the key barriers to post-secondary education for aboriginal people, especially in fields like science, business, computer science, life sciences. And aboriginal high school students often are steered away from math and other courses that could be prerequisites for these programs,” said Hamilton-Diabo, who is of Mohawk background.

“If you don’t see yourself reflected in the field, or in the curriculum, or among the teaching faculty, the likelihood of going into these fields decreases.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2016/02/02/aboriginal-grads-join-push-to-help-peers-embrace-higher-learning.html>

## **Indigenous Advocates Press for Change After Canada Human Rights Ruling**

Cara McKenna  
2/2/16

In the wake of a landmark ruling on human rights and indigenous children, advocates are demanding that Canada take immediate action to fix a failing system that is causing tens of thousands of First Nations children on reserve to suffer solely because of their race.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled on January 26 that the federal government racially discriminates against First Nations children by giving them significantly less funding for child welfare services than the rest of the population, despite their having a greater need. The tribunal ordered the federal government to “cease its discriminatory practices” by reforming relevant legislation and programs. Indigenous leaders and human rights organizations called the decision a watershed moment and a potential catalyst for eradicating inequities in First Nations health, education, housing and clean water.

Federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett have promised to work with First Nations leaders and communities, as well as provinces and territories, to equalize both funding and social outcomes. Advocates said they are keeping a close eye on the government to make sure it follows through. Urgent action is required, they said, because 163,000 First Nations children are still in jeopardy.

First Nations Child and Family Caring Society executive director Cindy Blackstock, who first launched the complaint to the tribunal with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) nine years ago, said the government could take its first steps right now—from information already available in the organization’s database.

“I welcome the remarks made by the government,” Blackstock said after the ruling. “But children only have one childhood. They can’t wait for studies.”

She added in a later statement that Canadians must now keep their government accountable.

“Racial discrimination against children must not be tolerated,” Blackstock said. “It is vital that Canadians watch the government's actions closely to ensure the ruling is implemented and inequalities in other First Nations children's services such as education, health and basics like water and housing are fully addressed.”

UNICEF Canada said that necessary next steps include funding preventative services to keep children out of foster care, establishing an indigenous child welfare agency, and creating an office of a national commissioner for children and youth. UNICEF Canada’s Chief Policy Advisor Marv Bernstein said while government has a key role, the well-being of First Nations children is everyone’s responsibility.

He said there must be immediate action after a lengthy litigation process and agreed that it must encompass other areas along with child welfare.

“Nine years is an eternity in the childhood of a girl or boy in critical need of services and supports that have been systematically denied throughout their short lives,” he said, adding that the decision “is a watershed moment and must serve as a catalyst to end inequities on all levels—not just in child welfare services—including the rights of Canada's aboriginal children to health, education, housing and clean water.”

Frontline child and family workers echoed the same call for action and are asking to be included in the government’s next steps to repair the broken child welfare system. In Saskatchewan, Yorkton Tribal Council Child and Family Services and Touchwood Child and Family Services issued a joint statement that said interim measures must be determined to end discriminatory practices.

“For several years we have asked the federal and provincial governments to work collaboratively with us. The panel re-affirms this request and it is time for action in Saskatchewan,” the statement said. “Daily challenges include a current need for a moratorium on family court applications, adoptions of our children, and a First Nations advocate who specializes in on-reserve child population.”

Kw’umut Lelum Child and Family Services on Vancouver Island echoed those assertions.

“What is required now is urgent action by both the federal and provincial governments working in full partnership with First Nations,” said Robina Thomas of Kw’umut Lelum’s board of directors in a statement. “There is no time to sit around and talk while children are discriminated against and suffer.”

First Nations leaders also joined the call for action.

“I call on the federal government to take immediate action in implementing fair and equitable funding provisions to ensure our children are cared for adequately and to meet the needs of our communities,” said AFN B.C. Regional Chief Shane Gottfriedson. “Now is the time for governments to take action in partnership with First Nations in addressing real and substantial change for the improvement of child welfare in our communities.”

Taking it even further out, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Vice Chief Kimberley Jonathan called the ruling “a great opportunity for the Liberal government and the Province of Saskatchewan to truly implement the United Nations Declaration of Rights on Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation of Commission Calls for Action in not only its legislation but in its everyday practices and policies”—something that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had promised during his campaign.

“We want to see real change for our First Nations children both on reserve and off reserve. Prevention, resources and adequate funding is only the beginning,” Jonathan said in a statement. “We can see from the tribunal’s decision that there is much more work that needs to be done. It is time this country and our home province really takes human rights seriously, especially when it comes to our most vulnerable groups of peoples, which includes our indigenous women and those living with disabilities. By honoring our First Nations children we become a richer nation.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/02/indigenous-advocates-press-change-after-canada-human-rights-ruling-163274>

## **Nunavut university grads encourage aboriginal youth to enrol**

### **2 Nunavut women highlighted in "Let's Take Our Future Further" campaign**

By John Van Dusen, CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 5:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 5:00 AM CT



Raigelee Alorut went back to school at age 40. The grandmother from Iqaluit would go on to earn a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Toronto. (submitted by Council of Universities of Ontario)

Current and former aboriginal university students are encouraging youth to follow in their footsteps in a new online campaign unveiled Tuesday.

The campaign, organized by Council of Ontario Universities and called "Let's Take Our Future Further," profiles 13 aboriginal university graduates, including two women with ties to Nunavut who took very different paths to post-secondary education.

Donna May Kimmaliardjuk spent much of her childhood in in Ottawa, but has family from Chesterfield Inlet. She's currently undergoing a six-year practicum to become the first female Inuk cardiac surgeon.

Raigelee Alorut has a much different story.

The grandmother and high school dropout from Iqaluit was 40 when she went back to school, spending a year in a transitional program at the University of Toronto.



Donna May Kimmaliardjuk poses with three aunts: Mary, Elizabeth and Helen Kreealak. Though she grew up in Ottawa, her family has roots in Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet in Nunavut. Now, she's on her way to becoming a cardiac surgeon. (submitted by Donna May Kimmaliardjuk)

"What am I doing here? I'm too old for this," Alorut said, reminiscing on the program that saw her sitting alongside students fresh out of high school.

She stuck with it, eventually graduating with a combined bachelor of arts degree in Aboriginal and Caribbean Studies.

"It took me seven years to get my degree – a lifetime – and it was a lot of hard work," she said.

Alorut found similarities between Caribbean and Inuit history.

"Learning their history, it was the same thing that happened to us. We were impacted by the Europeans and the same thing happened in Nunavut, the same thing happened in the Caribbean," she said.

"We're all related into one because of the first contact that happened."

Alorut is now awaiting to hear if she will be accepted into a teachers program.

"No matter how old you are, as old as I am, you can always try and get educated," she said. "Because there's a whole lot of things — you get to understand what the world is trying to tell you — and it's rewarding in the end."

## Building on the past

The online campaign, sponsored in part by the Government of Ontario, highlights Alorut's success with the hopes to inspire aboriginal youth to enrol in one of the province's 20 publicly-funded universities. According to the Council, there are 6,500 aboriginal students currently enrolled in their institutions.

"The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, underscore the important role that education plays in building and sustaining communities and realizing true reconciliation in the future for our collective past," says Reza Moridi, Ontario's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

"The [program] builds on that momentum."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nunavut-university-grads-encourage-aboriginal-youth-to-enrol-1.3431030>

## Yukon College, First Nations develop online course, First Nations 101

### 4 hour online program aimed at businesses, NGOs

By A New Day, CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 2:49 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 3:55 PM CT



Yukon College worked with 14 Yukon First Nations to develop the online course, focused on the territory's aboriginal culture, history and contemporary issues. (Minnie Clark)

Yukon College has teamed up with territory's First Nations to make a course on Yukon aboriginal history and culture more widely available.

"Yukon First Nations 101" is already a mandatory program for students at Yukon College; a new online version is aimed at businesses, non-governmental organizations and other interested Yukoners.

"I think there is an explosion of interest in this area," said Joanne Lewis, of the College's Northern Institute for Social Justice, which is delivering the program.



'We sensed a growing interest in having it online,' said Joanne Lewis, of Yukon College's Northern Institute of Social Justice. (Yukon College)

Lewis said the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work has helped build momentum. She said more businesses and organizations are recognizing the importance of building good relationships with First Nations communities, customers and clients.

"This is something they want to have their executives and the people in leadership positions in their organization start to take, so we're working with them," she said.

Ruth Massie, Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN), has recommended the program as a "starting point to understanding our history and our story in the Yukon."

The online course is organized into five modules, each focused on a different aspect of Yukon First Nations — history, heritage and culture; governance; residential schools; contemporary topics; and world views.

The course is available to any businesses or service providers at a cost of \$90 per person. Lewis said the first corporate client has already signed up — Northwestel.

"What we're hearing generally, and what we're sensing in the last two or three years, is an interest in knowing more about the environment in which people live and work," she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/first-nations-101-online-course-yukon-college-1.3432285>

## **Use of indigenous student grants leaves Alberta parent 'outraged'**

**'Money needs to go back to First Nations programming,' parent argues**

By Gareth Hampshire, CBC News Posted: Feb 04, 2016 5:00 AM MT Last Updated: Feb 04, 2016 5:00 AM MT



John Coffin has two children with Cree heritage in the Sturgeon School Division, but doesn't believe the extra money the board receives for them is being spent in the right spirit.

A parent in the Sturgeon School Division is raising questions about how grants that follow indigenous students are being spent by the school board.

John Coffin has two children with Cree heritage in the division north of Edmonton, but he doesn't believe the extra money the school board receives for them is being spent in the right spirit.

"Right now the money is simply given to the independent schools to do as they want and they can use that money for floor wax or door knobs," said Coffin.

School boards receive an extra \$1,178.10 from the province for each student whose parent checks a box identifying them as First Nations, Metis or Inuit.



In a statement provided to CBC News, the Notley government said it believes the "locally-elected boards are in the best position to determine the needs and priorities of their students."

Coffin disagrees and wrote to the board and the minister of education to make his point.

"The money should be spent on cultural initiatives," Coffin said. "This money needs to go back into First Nations, Metis and Inuit programming.

"I'm outraged and very upset about this."

A spokesperson for Minister David Eggen has confirmed he has received the letter and said Coffin will be getting a response soon.

## **'Absolutely legitimate question'**

The Sturgeon school board, which runs 16 schools, said it will be reviewing its policies in regards to the grants.

"It's an absolutely legitimate question," said Sandra Brenneis, director of learning support for the division, which has about 5,000 students enrolled in schools throughout Sturgeon County and the towns of Bon Accord, Gibbons and Redwater.

About 430 students in the division identify themselves as indigenous this school year, adding about \$500,000 to the board's budget.

Brenneis said that in the past the division hired an indigenous liaison worker as well as success coaches with the money, but said those measures created issues as well.

"It made our FNMI (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) kids feel ostracized rather than more connected," Brenneis said.

The division's goal is always to create an inclusive environment and not one where some students feel segregated, she said.

That's why the board allowed schools in the district to introduce measures they thought would be more effective, she said.

## **'Hard pressed to say we're doing any better'**

The division focuses on counselling for all students, Brenneis said.

"Our kids who identify as FNMI, we have some counsellors who connect more closely with them and track their achievements and particularly if there are any risk factors," she said.

Brenneis acknowledges only two counsellors in the division are indigenous, but said there are other things happening in the district, where aboriginal students already meet or outperform provincial standards.

Brenneis said a few of the schools do partner with aboriginal elders who are available to students. She said library resources are also being improved.

Still she acknowledges it's difficult to say whether the board's most recent policies have made the kind of difference it was hoping for.

"In the past we have tried different approaches and it didn't seem like it was having the impact and so we tried a different approach now and again," she said. "I would be hard pressed to say that we're doing any better."

## **Cultural vacuum**

Coffin would like to see access to elders in every school in the district as well as cultural liaison officers whose job it would be to connect with indigenous students.

"There's a cultural vacuum in Sturgeon School Division," he said.

Brenneis said the board will be working hard in the next few months to figure out how to do better as it draws up its next three-year plan.

That will take effect when the next school year starts in September.

"We're trying to determine how we can do this in a better way so it's certainly on our radar so that we can track and actually see if the things that we're doing are making a discernible difference, so it is a legitimate question," Brenneis said.

Coffin said he's encouraged to hear that, but will be making sure the issue isn't forgotten.

"I'm a dog with a bone in his mouth and I've got to keep going," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/use-of-indigenous-student-grants-leaves-alberta-parent-outraged-1.3432730>

# **Aboriginal Health**

## **Federal health minister to investigate Cree girl's case**

National News | January 28, 2016 by Jorge Barrera



(Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott during question period Thursday. APTN/image)

### **Jorge Barrera**

#### **APTN National News**

Health Minister Jane Philpott said Thursday she would be investigating the case of a 14-year-old Cree girl who was denied coverage for urgent dental work despite recommendations from orthodontists the procedure was needed to avoid costlier invasive surgery.

Health Canada issued a final denial of coverage on Monday, a day before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued a scathing ruling concluding the federal government discriminated against First Nation children by underfunding child welfare programs.

The ruling also ordered Ottawa to stop its narrow application of Jordan's Principle which requires federal bureaucrats to cover the urgent medical needs of First Nations children before settling jurisdictional funding issues with the provinces.

The mother of the girl said she was given renewed hope by Philpott's pledge, which was made in the House of Commons during question period.

"I am starting to feel like there is some light," said Stacey Shiner, 42, whose daughter is a Sucker Creek band member and is covered by Treaty 8 in Alberta.

NDP MP Charlie Angus raised the plight of Shiner's daughter during question period.



NDP MP Charlie Angus during question period Thursday.

“I ask myself, as a parent, how is that possible? To the health minister, what steps is she taking to issue directives...to make it right for (the girl) and all the other children who are still being denied basic rights every single day?” said Angus.

Philpott said the Liberal government is committed to ending the systemic discrimination of First Nations children.

“I will look into the situation that the honourable member has brought to my attention,” said Philpott.

Shiner said she has been battling with Health Canada for almost three years over the department’s refusal to cover her daughter’s desperately needed dental work under the Non-Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit program.

Despite letters from orthodontists and lobbying from the band and Treaty 8, Health Canada rejected the coverage request and subsequent appeals. The last rejection came on Monday, a day before the human rights tribunal issued its ruling after finding Canada systemically discriminated against First Nation children.

Shiner has since contacted a Toronto lawyer, on the advice of Cindy Blackstock, a prominent child advocate who triggered the human rights ruling through her complaint against Ottawa first filed in 2007. She said the lawyer has taken on the case for free and is preparing to push the matter before the court, if need be.

“The next step is to take the Canadian government to Federal Court, which we are preparing to do,” she said.

Shiner’s daughter, who she did not want named, has problems with her jaw, which is out of place, and seriously misaligned teeth that causes her pain and headaches.

Shiner said the orthodontists told her in 2013 her daughter needed immediate intervention, including an expander, an anchor and braces to avoid invasive surgery when she got older.



Mother Stacey Shiner has been fighting Health Canada over coverage for her daughter. Photo courtesy of Stacey Shiner.

Shiner said the surgery would have involved cutting bone from her hip and applying it to the jaw which would be wired shut.

Yet, Health Canada repeatedly refused to pay for the dental work, concluding that the procedure did not meet its criteria as a “functioning handicap malocclusion.” Malocclusion is a term describing misaligned teeth.

Health Canada also told Shiner that if she paid out of her own pocket for the dental work the insurance program would also not reimburse her.

“And I said, ‘I have to leave her in her condition and can’t help her?’ And they said, ‘Yeah, pretty much, if you go ahead and start we won’t approve.’”

Shiner said she couldn’t handle letting her daughter remain in pain so she paid over \$8,000 for the dental work.

Shiner said she was told Alberta would have covered at least part of the cost for the dental work if her child was non-First Nation.

And this wasn’t the first time Shiner said she’s faced the callousness of Health Canada bureaucrats.

In 2008, after surgeons removed a tumour from behind her daughter’s eye she was given a prescription for a specialized eye-drop. Shiner said the eye-drop was designed to protect

the eye from the roots of the tumour which were left because they were embedded in such a way their removal would have collapsed the eye.

Yet, Health Canada would not pay for the prescription. She still remembers the conversation with the pharmacist after he got off the phone with the Health Canada bureaucrat.

“He said, ‘They denied it, as a matter of fact they told me to tell you to buy Visine, that it should be sufficient,’” said Shiner.

She paid the \$90 for the specialized eye-drop.

“The more that she gets older and things are happening the more I am realizing they are prejudiced and they just don’t care in helping children, specially Aboriginal children,” she said. “We are quite connected with the Aboriginal communities here and I see it time and time again.”

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/28/federal-health-minister-to-investigate-cree-girls-case/>

## **A healing journey connects with First Nations culture**

CINDY E. HARNETT / TIMES COLONIST  
JANUARY 31, 2016 06:00 AM



Joan Tuttle, a Victoria counsellor, took an indigenous cultural competency course to better understand the multi-generational pain that flows through First Nations as a result of colonialism. Photograph By DARREN STONE, Times Colonist

Victoria counsellor Joan Tuttle sent a woman, grief-stricken over the loss of her baby, back to the river where her elders used to release their tears.

The woman was emotionally “frozen” in her trauma and had yet to cry.

Tuttle identified with the mother’s psychological pain.

Once trust and safety had been established, she asked the woman how her family and elders had grieved important losses.

The mourning First Nations mother told the counsellor she was from the mountains, where a river runs through her people’s territory.

“And when they are grieving, they go to the river to share their tears, and it carries away their pain,” Tuttle said.

Tuttle has practised as a counsellor for about 40 years, with at least half that time spent counselling First Nations people. The Victoria counsellor said she knows the importance of understanding a person’s roots as a way to find answers to their healing.

Still, she said, she’s a better counsellor today because of a San’yas Indigenous Cultural Safety online training course, offered through the Provincial Health Services Authority.

The “cultural competency” training was officially launched by the province in 2010 for all health authorities.

Last year, the First Nations Health Authority embarked on a process of re-registering its mental-health care providers, and made cultural competency training — developing the skills and knowledge to work successfully with people of another culture — a requirement.

Of the 161 mental-health counsellors registered with the First Nations Health Authority, 80 have taken the training. The deadline is in April.

CEO Joe Gallagher said the health authority recognized that many people don’t regard the health-care system as “safe.”

“Our people don’t feel culturally safe, so there are challenges in how we engage or if we engage the health system at all,” Gallagher said.

The goal of the course is to raise awareness about topics including indigenous diversity, the inter-generational effects of the residential school system, stereotyping and social determinants of aboriginal peoples’ health.

Gallagher said First Nations Health Authority staff — both aboriginal and non-aboriginal — have taken the training and realized its benefits.



A major focus is on the collective pain that flows through generations of First Nations people because of the residential school system, which plucked aboriginal children from their parents and homes and put them in boarding schools where many were abused.

Health and wellness must be dealt with in a holistic way, Gallagher said.

“It’s connected to who we are as a human being, our family, our community, our nation, our land, our resources and all the issues that impact how well we are — or not — at any given time in our lives,” Gallagher said.

The trauma induced by colonization, “where a lot of control was taken away from us,” is a fundamental part of First Nations’ health, he said.

Gallagher’s own parents were taken to a residential boarding school. “You think about the impact of that on a community of First Nations people with no children and you think about that happening for a generation and the impact that has on that society,” he said.

Alienated from their lands and resources, traditional lifestyle and diet, and having a way of life imposed on them, it’s not hard to imagine the links that were broken in terms of family structure and governance, Gallagher said.

“Families are struggling with parenting skills because they were disconnected,” he said. And that’s not to speak of the abuse and those people who never returned, he added.

“It’s a major impact on the fabric of our culture and our societies on which we’ve depended on for thousands of years,” Gallagher said.

Tuttle said for all her counseling experience, the training was invaluable.

“It reached me on a really deep level,” she said. “When I really got the whole history of colonialism, I was just horrified, truly horrified.

“I got how this has been carried through from generation to generation and it’s felt in a very deep place within every indigenous person.”

The training includes in-depth interviews with elders, interactive activities, discussions, and individual journal entries. The course is eight hours but the reading and discussion groups and work took more than 40 hours to complete, Tuttle said.

“I was just amazed with the in-depth way that the course goes into the history of aboriginal people in Canada,” she said.

It also forces counsellors to look at their own culture and the culture of their profession.

While counsellors sometimes refrain from sharing personal stories with clients, one of Tuttle's takeaways was that such sharing could be used to establish trust and ensure a balance of power between counselor and client.

The First Nations Health Authority advocates a culturally humble approach to address power imbalances present in many medical interactions.

Gallagher cautions, however: "You can't take an online course for eight hours and feel that you've achieved culturally competency — you really haven't, it's just the beginning.

"Cultural competency is what health providers strive for, and cultural humility is the way we get there, which provides for cultural safety."

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Learning the lexicon

Cultural sensitivity — Recognizing the importance of respecting differences between cultures

Cultural competency — Having the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to work successfully with people of different cultures

Cultural humility — Humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another person's experience; realizing that one can never become truly competent in a culture other than one's own

Cultural safety — The actions taken by health-care professionals to remedy the power imbalance inherent in patient-provider relationships

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/a-healing-journey-connects-with-first-nations-culture-1.2162427#sthash.uNCmUwp2.dpuf>

## **Aboriginal health researchers join in criticism of funding changes**

ELIZABETH PAYNE, OTTAWA CITIZEN

Published on: January 31, 2016 | Last Updated: January 31, 2016 6:27 PM EST



Aboriginal health researchers say their relationship with the federal agency that funds most biomedical research in Canada is broken.

Aboriginal health researchers are the latest group at odds with the federal agency in charge of funding medical research.

The researchers and others say reforms at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research mean less support for aboriginal research at a time when conditions in First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities are at “crisis proportions” and require more focus.

A statement from a group calling itself the Aboriginal Health Research Steering Committee said funding for such research through the CIHR has dropped to \$31 million in 2014-15 from \$34 million in 2007-2008, and is expected to fall further.

At the same time, indigenous people make up a growing proportion of the Canadian population — currently about 4.6 per cent — with a disproportionate amount of health problems, the group says. Canada’s new Liberal government has pledged to improve relations with indigenous Canadians.

“CIHR seems very reluctant to change and is out of step with the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and with the efforts of the new federal government to forge a new nation-to-nation relationship,” said Fred Wien, a member of the group and professor emeritus in social work at Dalhousie University.

The CIHR has been the focus of recent criticism from Canadian scientists who say reforms are making it more difficult for researchers, especially those doing basic research, and forcing some to consider closing their labs. Many have also criticized the agency for failing to listen to their concerns.

The CIHR, in a statement, said indigenous health research is a priority and funding has remained relatively consistent over the last five years at close to \$30 million a year.

“We are working with our Institute of Aboriginal Peoples’ Health and the Indigenous health research community, including the Aboriginal Health Research Steering Committee, to make sure that proposals for Indigenous health research projects can be just as successful in our new funding program as other proposals,” it said.

But researchers say its recent actions do not support that. And the steering committee, formed last year by prominent indigenous and non-indigenous scholars as well as representatives from the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, points fingers at CIHR management for failing to take meaningful action on concerns about lack of support for aboriginal research.

“It is amazing that this federal granting council has not made support for research on what is arguably the most significant public health issue in the country an overriding priority,” says a document titled Aboriginal Health Research and the CIHR: How is That Going?

The group wants the CIHR to increase spending on aboriginal health research to better reflect the population level and the health challenges affecting aboriginal communities, but says the CIHR has rejected that proposal. In a September 2015 letter, CIHR officials said the agency “is not in a position to either set or commit to a specific financial target for any population that we are mandated to support.”

Members of the committee say that means “there is no special place for indigenous people ...”

Marlene Brant Castellano, professor emeritus of indigenous studies at Trent University, who is a Mohawk member of the Tyendinaga First Nation, said Canada should follow the lead of New Zealand and Australia and ensure health research funding is disproportionately higher than the percentage indigenous people represent of the population because of the health issues indigenous people face.

Castellano said that under the first competition for funding under a restructured peer review program last year, no more than one per cent of awards went to research that had anything to do with aboriginal issues.

“We are told that the CIHR cannot set proportion numbers for any of the populations that they serve and that just runs counter to reason sanity, justice and equity.”

**Direct Link:** <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/aboriginal-health-researchers-join-in-criticism-of-funding-changes>

## **B.C.'s First Nations Health Authority under fire from auditor general**

## **Auditor General Michael Ferguson was acting on anonymous tips his office had received**

CBC News Posted: Feb 02, 2016 10:03 AM PT Last Updated: Feb 02, 2016 10:03 AM PT



Auditor General Michael Ferguson speaks at a news conference in Ottawa on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 following the tabling of his spring report to Parliament. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

B.C.'s first Nations Health Authority is under fire from Canada's auditor general for gaps in its recruiting, compensation and conflict of interest policies.

The concerns were outlined by **Auditor General Michael Ferguson in his report which was released on Tuesday**. Ferguson was acting on tips his office had received.

"We conducted this audit in response to an anonymous document we received, making allegations against the authority in relation to its accountability and transparency," said Ferguson.

While the report found that overall "the First Nations Health Authority had established an accountability and governance framework to guide its operations and to promote transparency and accountability," Ferguson still had several areas of concern.

"We found gaps in the policies we examined, pertaining to conflict of interest, recruitment, personnel security, administrative investigations, financial information and disclosure, and employee relocation. We also found that the authority's guidance on implementing these policies was limited," said the report.

The report noted the health authority had been through a transition period of rapid growth as it established itself. The First Nations Health Authority took over planning, designing, managing, and funding the delivery of First Nations health programs across British Columbia in October 2013, growing from less than 50 employees in 2009 to almost 500 employees in 2015, including the transfer of about 200 employees from Health Canada in 2013.

"This transition involved merging different organizational cultures and information technology and financial management systems, and establishing an accountability and

governance framework that reflected its expanded and increasingly complex operations," noted the report.

## **Undocumented qualifications**

In order to examine allegations of improper hiring processes, the report reviewed 14 personnel files of managers working within the authority, to determine whether there was evidence that the most qualified candidates had been hired in each case.

Specifically only three of the 14 positions were posted publicly, and there was evidence only six of the candidates hired possessed the required qualifications, only two had the required education, and only three had the required background checks performed.

"We found that evidence was limited, in most of these files, to demonstrate that the most qualified candidate was the one hired," concluded the report.

The report concluded guidelines on how to assess candidates for positions and how to document those decisions was limited.

"It did not specify how to determine the most qualified candidate, nor did it specify in what situations external (instead of internal) recruitment should be pursued. This type of guidance is required to support the fairness and competency considerations expected of organizations that are publicly funded."

## **Further conclusions**

The report detailed several other areas of concern.

While the report found the health authority complied with its policy on conflict of interest, "it did not require new employees to formally declare whether they had conflicts of interest. Nor did it require existing employees to periodically declare whether they had conflicts of interest.

"There was also gaps in criminal record checks for employees working with vulnerable people, the report noted. "The policy did not contain provisions for ensuring that security clearances were updated periodically."

It also found the policies did not specify under what circumstances complainants' supervisors (as opposed to others) should carry out investigations.

"This guidance would be needed to help support the objectivity of investigations. Furthermore, the policy did not specify the type of documentation needed to demonstrate that investigations had been properly carried out. Such guidance is important, because it

would help to protect the organization and prevent repercussions for people who raise allegations in good faith."

There was also a lack of guidelines for compensation for senior executives.

"We also found that justifications for the considerable variation in allowances provided in senior management employment agreements were not documented."

"The Relocation Policy set out relocation allowances for employees, but not for senior executives. Guidelines on the amounts that can be reimbursed to senior executives would help to ensure fairness and consistency in how they are compensated."

It also found the policies did not require the authority to disclose the amounts spent on professional and service contracts, hospitality and travel, and salaries for senior officials.

"We noted that the authority posted board members' remuneration, audited financial statements, and annual reports and service plans, but not amounts spent on professional and service contracts, hospitality and travel, and senior executives' salaries."

## **Health authority agrees with findings**

In its response, which was included in the report, the health authority agreed with all of the auditor general's findings and promised to review its policies.

When it came to recruiting staff, the health authority defended its hiring practices at the time.

"The First Nations Health Authority recruited the required staff to the best of its abilities through an initial policy framework in order to meet the aggressive time frames required to successfully achieve this unique transfer, the first of its kind in Canada," said the response.

"The authority is now undertaking further work to improve its policies in the area of recruitment and selection that target the most qualified candidates, including enhancements to procedures and documentation."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-s-first-nations-health-authority-under-fire-from-auditor-general-1.3430254>

## **Indigenous artist uses birch bark biting to heal after residential school, cancer**



## June McCallum-Gareau's first exhibition is at Grace Campbell Gallery in Prince Albert

CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 9:52 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 9:52 PM CT



June McCallum-Gareau does birch bark biting in front of some of her designs. (June McCallum-Gareau/Submitted to CBC)

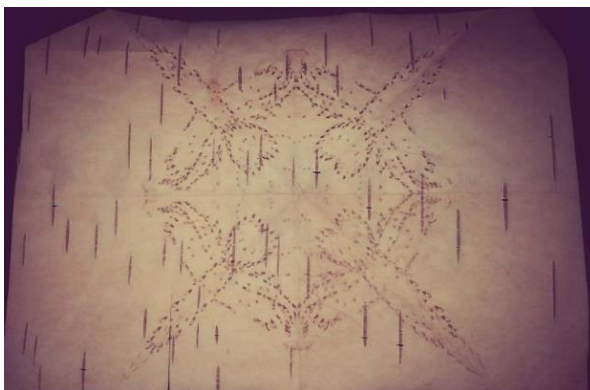
June McCallum-Gareau says when she sits down to make traditional art it's therapeutic. The residential school survivor and cancer survivor is showcasing her first exhibit of birch bark biting and caribou tufting at the Grace Campbell Gallery in Prince Albert, Sask.

"When you do the art everything else is like, you just concentrate on the art. I feel happy doing it and time goes really fast," McCallum-Gareau said. "Time just slides for me, I don't think, I'm not in stress. I get to think about the art."

McCallum-Gareau is a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and learned traditional art from her mother. She picked up beading and moccasin making quickly, but it wasn't until later in her life that she began the birch bark biting and caribou tufting.

"Birch bark biting was just about a lost art at one time," McCallum-Gareau said.

"That's the one I want to pass on to the young people."



One of June McCallum-Gareau's birch bark biting designs. (June McCallum-Gareau/Submitted to CBC)

An artist who is birch bark biting takes a piece of the bark and peels it, McCallum-Gareau explained. The bark is then folded four or six times before biting begins.

"You visualize the picture you want to make in your mind, you start biting. I can do butterflies, dragonflies, ladybugs, and I started doing owls and birds," she said.

As for how that works, McCallum-Gareau said she doesn't really have an explanation, it's about practicing the visualizations.

"It took me two years to develop this. I threw away a lot of biting," she said.



Another birch bark biting design. (June McCallum-Gareau/Submitted to CBC)

Caribou tufting involves tanning a hide on one side. Then the hide is cut and coloured. McCallum-Gareau said the artist puts the hide on a canvas background before using sinew and special scissors to create designs like flowers or butterflies.



June McCallum-Gareau's caribou tufting designs. (June McCallum-Gareau/Submitted to CBC)

McCallum-Gareau said she is very happy with the response her work has received during her very first exhibition.

"It makes me feel really happy and I feel like I have accomplished something in my life to pass on when I'm gone," she said.

McCallum-Gareau's exhibit runs until Feb. 24 at the gallery in the J.M. Cuelenaere Library.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/artist-uses-birch-bark-biting-to-heal-1.3433077>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

### Aboriginal elder artisan happy to talk about who she is

Cory Hurley

Published on January 29, 2016





*Published on January 28, 2016*

**GERALDINE BROPHY/THE WESTER STAR**

*Pauline Gilley is shown behind a mesh displaying craft items during the Aboriginal Crafts Fair held at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland on Thursday. The fair was one of the activities held at the campus during Indigenous Peoples Week, Jan. 24-Feb. 1.*

The emotion in Phyllis Cooper's voice is unquestionable as she shares a bit of her aboriginal ancestry. The emotion is only outdone by the passion she feels as she speaks of a society that allows her to do so.

An elder now living in Stephenville, Cooper grew up as a Park in Gillams on the north shore of the Bay of Islands. During her upbringing, she was told not to speak of her ancestry so nobody would know they were "Indian."

There is no racism or prejudice, but pride, in her use of the term. Her father, employed with Bowaters in Corner Brook, would lose his job if people outside her community knew, she says.

"People find that difficult to believe now, but that is the way it was," Cooper said. "I told everybody I was Indian. I didn't care if they liked me or not."

Her maternal family — the Matthews — originated from Conne River. The family was forced to leave because priests would not let them speak their language, she said.

Her family lived off the land, and still do. Cooper loves to fish and hunt, and don't be surprised to see the grandmother out on her quad in the Stephenville area.

However, it's her work inside that brought her to Grenfell Campus, Memorial University on Thursday. She was one of the artisans at the Aboriginal Crafts Fair.

Moccasins are Cooper's forte, something she learned to do years ago for her children and continued to make for her grandchildren. As the word of her expertise spread, so did requests from others who wanted to expose their feet to the beauty and comfort of the Mi'kmaq slippers.

Many years ago, a group of Mi'kmaq women in Stephenville wanted to learn to make moccasins, Cooper recalls. Some women from Conne River came to show them how, and she hasn't stopped since.

These days, she is the one doing the teaching — hoping to keep the tradition alive by offering workshops in the area.

Her learning doesn't stop though. She continues to experiment with beads to improve upon her designs, and her craftwork also includes medicine bags, jewellery and dreamcatchers. She enjoys working with leather, beads and sealskin.

Now retired, Cooper has attended several fairs in the region, selling her work, but acknowledges it's about much more than making a few dollars. The chance to share and celebrate her heritage is more important.

“Our people are recognized for who they are now,” she said. “They don't have to hide it anymore. We are talking about our children recognizing where they came from, and our grandchildren.”

Education is key, says Cooper. She said the Mi'kmaq people inhabited the land first, shared it, and were persecuted for it.

“Finally, we are getting some people in power realizing this is not right,” she said.

The recognition, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, of the abuse aboriginal children suffered in residential schools was a significant moment for Cooper. Thousands of children died in residential institutions, but that number may have been much higher. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has apologized on behalf of the country for failing the aboriginal community.

“Like the Holocaust, many people claimed it didn't happen, but it did,” she said. “Hopefully, people will start to heal, and we will see better things happening on the reserves and other places.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thewesternstar.com/Living/2016-01-29/article-4419291/Aboriginal-elder-artisan-happy-to-talk-about-who-she-is/1>

## **Métis filmmakers preserving culture with film; call for submissions**

Janelle and Jérémie Wookey will accept 100 videos in 100 days to create a mosaic of Métis stories to be shared for all time.





Jérémie and Janelle Wookey work on their latest project at their exchange district office.

**By: Braeden Jones** Metro Published on Tue Feb 02 2016

Sibling filmmaking duo Janelle and Jérémie Wookey are trying to preserve a snapshot of Métis culture, and are crowdsourcing to broaden the scope.

They are asking 100 Métis people ages 15 to 40 to record videos sharing what their heritage and identity means to them, and upload those videos to their website, [100metis.ca](http://100metis.ca).

“There’s a wide gamut in terms of how people process their Métis (identity),” said Janelle Wookey. “People still have a lot of questions about what it means and why does it matter... those are the questions we are trying to answer.”

She sees the website as a potential long-standing archive to preserve the modern Métis cultural identity, formed by stories and personal narratives of the past.

“If we are lucky, (the website) will be around for generations and people will learn who we were 30, 40 years ago,” she said.

Wookey learned about her Métis lineage 10 years ago, and made a film seven years ago about the last three generations of the Red River Métis.

During that project, a great niece of Louis Riel, Augustine Abraham, said in an interview for the film that her wish for the future was for Métis youth to “dig deep” to keep the spirit of the Métis alive.

The 100Metis.ca project is an answer to that call, and by giving people a forum for sharing their lived perception of Métis culture the Wookeys hope to show who the Métis are, where that identity comes from, and where they are going as a people.

“In the end we hope to have this online archive which will be kind of like a mosaic of 100 faces people can click and get a better understanding of Métis identity, and what it means for people to be Métis today,” Wookey said.

They are also creating a documentary about the process and will be accepting video submissions for 100 days.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/2016/02/03/winnipeg-metis-filmmakers-preserving-culture-with-film.html>

## Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

### Fenelon Falls Kawartha Missions focuses on appalling poverty on First Nations reserves

The new branch has only been around since last June, but has already shipped thousands of pounds of food, clothing and other items to several reserves in Ontario



#### 600 FFalls Kawartha Mission Attiwapiskat

*A shipment of food, clothing and other items was the first sent to First Nations people at Attiwapiskat last September, thanks to the efforts of the Fenelon Falls Kawartha Missions. submitted photo*

Kawartha Lakes This Week

By Mary Riley, 5 hours ago

FENELON FALLS - There are only about five members but they are trying to change a world of poverty and suffering in Ontario's backyard.

Elva Potter, who started the Fenelon Falls branch of the Kawartha Missions last year, is happy that Canada is reaching out to help Syrian refugees.

But it is the suffering on Native reserves she couldn't ignore, and to her, charity begins at home.

"It's wonderful what Canada is doing for the refugees but we should do for our own, too," she says. "People have told me they are glad to see help for Syrian refugees. But they comment it would be nice to do something for our own indigenous people."

Ms Potter was part of the Kawartha Missions Lindsay since 2012, a group she says "has helped people all around the world," including the 2010 Haiti earthquake.



When she decided to start the Fenelon Falls Kawartha Missions branch last June, she wanted to focus on helping First Nations people.

“You have to have a contact on a reserve,” she explained, adding she was able “after a lot of phoning and conversations” to find First Nations contacts in Peterborough and Belleville who could liaise with several reserves in Ontario.

Last September, the group sent its first shipment -- 1,500 lbs -- of food, clothing for adults and children, toys, baby layettes, household and personal care items to Attiwapiskat in northern Ontario. In November, another shipment of roughly 1,400 lbs went to Manitoulin Island to be shared among the five reserves. In January, yet another shipment went to Dryden; this one was about 2,000 lbs.

Ms Potter says the need is desperate.

“They are so poor; people don’t see how bad it is on reserves. Obesity and diabetes is rampant, because they are not allowed to hunt and fish the way they used to in their own culture. The food they eat now is not natural to their way of life.”

She said food is the primary need, with clothing and personal care items a close second. The group collects all household items except large appliances. One of the problems is cost; Ms Potter said Erb Transport from Cobourg was making a trip to Attiwapiskat and offered to take the mission shipment to the reserve free of charge. Another shipment was driven to Timmins by one of the mission volunteers.

Wayne Mcconnachie of Kids Against Hunger, a humanitarian food aid organization, says the agency is also helping out. Peterborough is the Canadian head office. He explained the Fenelon Falls Kawartha Mission “filled out an accountability form” and Kids Against Hunger is providing 15,000 pack meals for the mission to send to the reserves.

Mr. McConnachie said each meal is made up of a formula that contains 21 vitamins and minerals and is 52 per cent protein by weight. It includes dried vegetables and rice and is heat-sealed in plastic packages.

“The meals are designed to bring back the health of a starving child...they are very nutritious,” he said. “Each pack has a full day’s nutrition for a family of six.”

The agency has satellite branches, he said, that send the food packs across Canada. As a sponsor organization, Kids Against Hunger raises the money and provides the meals to groups such as the Fenelon Falls Kawartha Mission, who distribute them.

Ms Potter said although the Fenelon Falls membership is currently only a few people they plan to continue their work. They also get some help from other branches, including Lindsay.

She noted the Mission is very grateful for donations. All types of clothing, household items and personal care items are welcomed. Donors are asked to ensure items are in good condition, she requested, noting “we can’t send coats with broken zippers.”

The Mission would also be happy to hear from anyone who can provide storage for the items.

To learn how to donate or for more information, please call Ms Potter at 705-454-8534 or Gertie at 705-439-2573.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.mykawartha.com/news-story/6259645-fenelon-falls-kawartha-missions-focuses-on-appalling-poverty-on-first-nations-reserves/>

# Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

## What La Loche really needs are jobs and economic development

BRUCE JOHNSTONE

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is greeted by people from La Loche on Friday.

Now that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Premier Brad Wall, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale, Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde and other dignitaries, along with hordes of media, have visited La Loche following last week's shooting spree that left four dead and seven injured, it is difficult to find something original or insightful to say about the tragedy.

Much has been said and written about the lack of recreation facilities, the underfunding of social programs, the chronically high unemployment, the persistent problems of alcohol and drug abuse, the high suicide rate, the gangs, the sad history of colonization, residential schools and 'cultural genocide' of the Dene people.

The last thing anyone in that community needs is another so-called "expert from the South" telling them what they need and don't need.

But at the risk of sounding like an instant expert (having spent all of a couple of hours in La Loche nearly two years ago), I would say the solution to the problems that have plagued that community for decades can be summed up in two words: economic development.

Of course, it's easy to say it; it's a lot harder to make it happen.

But one thing I do know from my infrequent travels to the North is that those First Nations and Metis communities that have a measure of control over their local economy,

either through private or band ownership of businesses, fare better than those that are dependent on the fickle generosity of government.

Among the many depressing statistics about La Loche (a suicide rate more than three times higher than the provincial average, the fact that a town of 3,000 has no restaurant, hotel, bank, theatre and few recreation facilities), the most depressing was the employment rate of 20 per cent.

One out of five employed. How can any community hope to survive, let alone thrive, with an unemployment rate of 80 per cent? The answer is, it can't. But it wasn't always this way.

From time immemorial, the area around Lac La Loche was prime hunting and fishing ground for the Dene people and the site of trading posts during the 18th and 19th centuries. The 20th century brought missions, churches, schools, roads and services, like electricity and telephones, sewer and water. The opening of Highway 955 to the Cluff Lake uranium mine and the new La Loche Community School in 1979 held great promise for the village of La Loche and the nearby, newly created Clearwater River Dene Nation.

Nearly 40 years later, that promise has yet to be fulfilled and the high school, instead of a symbol of hope for the future, is now a constant reminder of the tragic events of Jan. 22, 2016.

When I visited La Loche briefly with the Northern Business Task Force in March 2014, all the talk was about the hundreds of claims being staked around the Athabasca Basin in one of the hottest uranium staking rushes in decades in the North. And the boom in the oilsands capital of Canada — Ft. McMurray, Alta. — was attracting thousands of workers from all over Canada, including La Loche.

But the lure of big bucks and quick riches in Fort Mac and the Athabasca Basin was very much a mixed blessing for La Loche. "Everybody's aware of what's going on to the north of us — for good or ill, depending on what your point of view is," said La Loche town manager Doug Gailey.

In other words, the negative impact of the influx of workers with money — increased alcohol and drug use and crime — more often than not offsets the benefits of increased economic activity and consumer spending.

But there are many examples of First Nations and Metis communities that have benefited from economic development. The Lac La Ronge Indian Band owns a fleet of businesses though its economic development arm, Kitsaki, Management, in a variety of sectors, including transportation, road construction, insurance, hospitality, mining and agriculture. Whitecap Dakota First Nation through Whitecap Development Corp. has attracted over \$100 million in investment for its golf course, casino, bison ranch, hotel, convenience store, among others.

What kind of economic development does La Loche need? The only ones who can answer that question are the real experts: the people of La Loche.

**Direct Link:** <http://leaderpost.com/opinion/columnists/johnstone-what-la-loche-really-needs-are-jobs>

## Aboriginal Politics

### ITK president pitches new Inuit-government political entity

**“We are a practical people and we want to work with the federal government”**

JIM BELL, January 28, 2016 - 4:00 pm



ITK President Natan Obed speaks Jan. 27 at the Northern Lights 2016 trade show in Ottawa. ITK is sponsoring a series of in-depth workshops — through a project called Kajusivugut — on the Inuit Nunangat labour market, aimed at finding better ways to fund and deliver training programs for Inuit. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is proposing to work with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government on a joint political body that would create a new relationship between Inuit and the federal government, ITK president Natan Obed said Jan. 27.

Obed said ITK pitched the idea to Trudeau at a history-making meeting held Jan. 26, when Trudeau became the first prime minister to hold a formal meeting with Inuit leaders at ITK’s Ottawa office.

“We at ITK have suggested that there be a senior political entity that has representation from the federal government and the Inuit leadership that works through how we get to that next level in our relationship and in normalizing our relationship,” Obed said in an interview.

Trudeau, with Nunavut MP Hunter Tootoo, Northwest Territories MP Michael McLeod, Yukon MP Larry Bagnell, along with Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and her parliamentary secretary, Labrador MP Yvonne Jones, spent about an hour listening to Inuit leaders that day.

One of the three big topics on their agenda was the “overarching relationship” between the Crown and Inuit, said Obed, who has stated earlier that one of the goals of his presidency is to create a new Inuit-Crown relationship.

To that end, he said ITK has proposed a new high-level body through which Inuit leaders and federal politicians would go beyond “broad statements and broad pledges” and make “a political commitment for change.”

“It would be a political body that would make things come into reality and I would imagine it would have a short work-plan that would be based on a few of the shared big picture things we said we were going to do,” Obed said.

Obed said Trudeau told him that he would consider the idea and “would consider working with me on how to get to a common place.”

It’s likely that if the bilateral action group is formed, their first step would be development of a work-plan.

In addition to the Inuit-Crown relationship, Inuit leaders also discussed social issues — healthy Inuit individuals and families — and economic development.

An important feature of this meeting is that Inuit leaders set the agenda.

“The issues that we discussed were the issues that Inuit wanted to discuss, not what the prime minister or the government wanted to discuss with us. It was great to see the prime minister was comfortable with having Inuit speak to him on our terms,” Obed said.

The work of developing that agenda began after this past Dec. 16, when Obed invited Trudeau to meet with ITK.

Because of the advance preparation, the gathering became a “working meeting,” Obed said, to figure how to bring Inuit and federal government priorities together.

He said he believes that the current federal government is prepared to find a “new way” of implementing land claims agreements based on their spirit and intent, rather than on the letter of the law.

Jan. 26 was also a big deal for ITK’s staff, all of whom were involved in the excitement of Trudeau’s visit.

“We had everyone congregate in the lobby and as the prime minister came in he jumped into a group photo with all of our staff,” Obed said,

“It only took a couple of minutes, but it meant the world to people who had been working on Inuit issues for a long time.”

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674itk\\_president\\_pitches\\_new\\_inuit-government\\_political\\_entity/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674itk_president_pitches_new_inuit-government_political_entity/)

## **Duane Smith resigns as president of ICC Canada**

**Resignation follows election as chair and CEO of Inuvialuit Regional Corp.**

CBC News Posted: Jan 29, 2016 2:44 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 29, 2016 2:55 PM CT



Duane Smith was elected chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation on Jan 25. (David Thurton/CBC)

The new head of the Inuvialuit Regional Corp. has resigned from his post as president of Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada and vice-chair of ICC, the group announced in a news release.

Duane Smith was elected chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Council on Monday, replacing outgoing chair Nellie Cournoyea.

Smith will remain on the board of ICC Canada, along with the other elected leaders of the four Inuit land claims settlement regions.

Smith has worked with ICC for over 17 years, the news release states.

"On the international stage, I always aimed to do things that made a difference at home and in that way, moving to my new role at IRC is simply a continuation of this approach," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/duane-smith-resigns-icc-1.3426102>

## **Long-time Inuit circumpolar leader joins Inuvialuit Regional Corp.**

## Newly-elected Duane Smith replaces Nellie Cournoyea at the IRC

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, February 01, 2016 - 10:00 am



Duane Smith, second to the right in the back row, stands with other Inuit Circumpolar Council executives at his final meeting with the organization in Ottawa. (HANDOUT PHOTO)

The Inuit Circumpolar Council said good-bye to its Canadian chairperson last week in Ottawa.

Duane Smith, the ICC vice president and ICC-Canada president, resigned from his ICC positions after 17 years with the international organization which represents Inuit in Canada, Alaska, Russia and Greenland.

“I am leaving with some regret, but I believe my contribution to ICC has left the organization with the tools to continue to do great work,” Smith said in a Jan. 28 news release.

Smith’s decision to resign, announced at an ICC meeting held during the Northern Lights conference in Ottawa, came after Smith was elected to replace Nellie Cournoyea as the Chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corp.

“On the international stage, I always aimed to do things that made a difference at home and in that way, moving to my new role at IRC is simply a continuation of this approach,” Smith said.

Jim Stotts, ICC vice chair for Alaska, said “Duane was never shy to challenge Arctic states and industry when our interests were not addressed, but mostly he asked how we can all work together.”

And ICC’s chairperson Okalik Eegeesiak also said Smith would be missed.



“Your contribution to and for Inuit in the work ICC undertakes from Novo Chaplino in Russia, Bethel in Alaska, to Iqaluit in Canada, and Nuuk in Greenland will also be missed. I’m glad your ICC work will continue to be felt at IRC,” she said.

The ICC did not say in its release how the organization plans to replace Smith as ICC-Canada chair.

In Ottawa, the ICC executives also discussed projects that the organization is expected to deliver on by its next general assembly to take place in Alaska in 2018.

This included a review of progress of the Kitigaaryuit Declaration, the four-year mandate given to the ICC at its last general assembly in 2014.

Three Inuit summits — discussed at last September’s annual general meeting in Cambridge Bay — were also launched in Ottawa.

These include:

- a circumpolar-wide wildlife summit to be held in the Canadian Arctic in November of this year;
- an Inuit economic summit in Alaska in February 2017; and,
- and an Inuit education summit in the autumn of 2017.

“We will miss Duane’s guidance as we plan and implement these very important summits,” said Hjalmar Dahl, the ICC vice chair for Greenland.

The next meeting for the ICC executives will take place in Greenland this coming August.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674international\\_inuit\\_org\\_loses\\_canadian\\_chair\\_duane\\_smith\\_to\\_inuvialuit/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674international_inuit_org_loses_canadian_chair_duane_smith_to_inuvialuit/)

## **UN hails blunt PM talk on indigenous issues**



## UN hails blunt PM talk on indigenous issues

The Canadian Press, 2016

*Barbara Bailey, vice-chair of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, speaks during a news conference on the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, Monday February 1, 2016 in Ottawa. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wylid*

19 hours ago

OTTAWA — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's talk of systemic discrimination against Canada's Aboriginal Peoples lends legitimacy to the issues and those tackling them, a United Nations human rights expert said Monday.

Barbara Bailey, the vice-chair of the UN committee on the elimination of discrimination against women, said the prime minister's remarks are significant because they come from the "very top."

A "pervasive culture" in police forces, governments and religious communities has led to indigenous people being less valued, Trudeau said in a CBC forum on Sunday.

"It certainly gives legitimacy to those who are trying to do something about these issues," Bailey said following a meeting with other human rights experts and Canada's ministers of Justice, Indigenous Affairs and Status of Women.

"I think somewhere the cycle has to be broken."

Failures of the justice system were also flagged last March in a report by Bailey's committee, which revealed that Canada failed to thoroughly investigate why indigenous women are targeted for violence.

After conducting a confidential inquiry in 2013, Bailey's committee noted officials have failed to protect aboriginal women, hold offenders to account and ensure that victims get redress.

"What we found in our inquiry was that although, for example, the residential school practice had ended, regrettably as late as it did, that whole kind of discrimination was being reproduced in the social welfare policies and the way social welfare is administered in those communities," Bailey said.

In December, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson conceded there are racists in his force during a session with First Nations leaders and delegates in Gatineau, Que.

"I don't want them to be in my police force," Paulson said.

The Liberal government is now in the midst of consultations as it prepares to examine issues behind the phenomenon of missing and murdered indigenous women.

It will be critical to address Canada's colonial legacy during this process, Bailey noted.

"There is extremely entrenched, institutionalized stereotyping that frames the response of officials and the state, of course, to the situation of aboriginal women and girls," Bailey said.

"If we cannot tackle that, which is so ingrained into the social fabric of Canada ... Unless we can deconstruct those stereotypes, dismantle them and see these persons as human beings who want a voice, who want to be treated as human, I think we are going to be missing the point."

There's no question the social and economic conditions of aboriginal women and girls in Canada pose problems, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said outside the Commons on Monday.

"We won't be able to fix this problem without addressing that," she said.

"This is a very constant message."

The inquiry is a welcome step forward, said James Cavallaro, chair of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

He was among the experts who met the ministers on Monday.

"We addressed questions about the nature of the inquiry, how it will be done, what issues will be addressed with a particular focus and great interest on ... the need to incorporate human rights standards, principles and the need to be compliant with Canada's obligations," Cavallaro said.

The government plans to appoint the best possible commissioner or commissioners and will ensure the inquiry is at arm's length from government, Bennett said.

The Liberals are also facing the issue of how to address scathing findings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which found Canada discriminated against children on reserve by underfunding child welfare programs.

First Nations advocate Cindy Blackstock estimates at least \$200-million in new funding is needed in this year's budget to close the financial gap that currently exists.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/6258175-un-hails-blunt-pm-talk-on-indigenous-issues/>

## **NDP's Melanie Mark becomes first indigenous woman elected to B.C. legislature from Vancouver–Mount Pleasant**

by [Charlie Smith](#) on February 2nd, 2016 at 9:20 PM



Melanie Mark enjoyed widespread support from First Nations people in her first attempt at political office.

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It's been an astonishing rise for Melanie Mark.

Raised in the Downtown Eastside by a mother who struggled with addiction (now 10 years sober) and a father who died of an overdose, the former president of the Urban Native Youth Association has been elected as the new NDP MLA for Vancouver—Mount Pleasant.

With nearly all the ballots counted, Mark has more than 60 percent of the vote in the NDP stronghold of Vancouver—Mount Pleasant, far ahead of the Greens' Pete Fry and the B.C. Liberals' Gavin Dew.

When she's sworn into office, the Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree, and Ojibway single mother will become the first fully indigenous woman elected to the B.C. legislature. (NDP finance critic Carole James is of Métis ancestry.)

Mark succeeds Jenny Kwan, who resigned the seat in advance of her successful run for Parliament as the NDP candidate in Vancouver East.

The first aboriginal man ever elected to a legislature in Canada was Frank Calder. He was elected in the B.C. constituency of Atlin in 1949 and remained in office until 1979.

The second aboriginal man elected was Larry Guno, a lawyer and playwright who represented Atlin from 1986 to 1991.

Mark focused her campaign on achieving a fairer deal for low-income people, highlighting the lack of affordable housing, the precarious job market, and rising tuition, medical-services, and B.C. Hydro fees.

"I was raised in social housing in East Van," she wrote in [a commentary](#) on this website before the election. "I moved more than 30 times in my life."

Mark spent eight years working in the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth, eventually being promoted to associate deputy representative to Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond.

The NDP also captured a second by-election today. In Coquitlam–Burke Mountain, Jodie Wickens defeated B.C. Liberal Joan Isaacs, Green candidate Joe Keithley, and Libertarian Paul Geddes.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/629331/ndps-melanie-mark-will-become-first-indigenous-woman-be-elected-bc-legislature>

## Murray Sinclair: Stubbornness On Aboriginal Spending Costs More In Long Run

CP | By Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press

Posted: 02/04/2016 10:37 am EST Updated: 02/04/2016 11:59 am EST

**THE CANADIAN PRESS** 🇨🇦

OTTAWA — Canada must find a new way of doing business with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples if it wants to save money in the long term, according to Truth and Reconciliation Commission chairman Murray Sinclair.

As Finance Minister Bill Morneau prepares his maiden budget, the federal government is under tremendous pressure to put its money where its mouth is when it comes to repairing the long-standing rift with indigenous communities.



Justice Murray Sinclair shakes hands with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report in December. (Photo: Adrian Wyld/CP)

The Liberals, who have made sweeping commitments including lifting a two-per-cent cap on funding for reserve programs and services, also face the challenge of following through when the fiscal landscape is more complicated than anticipated during the election campaign.

"This is their first budget as government and I think that, as such, they're probably going to have to deal with what they've got in terms of the cards that they're playing with and then look at a more long-term road map," Sinclair said.

Sinclair noted, however, that failing to invest will end up costing far more.

The federal government needs to find a way to spend money wisely and effectively rather than constantly moving from crisis to crisis, he said.

"If they dealt with that trauma and pain in a proper way, coming out of that experience, the amount of money that they are spending on those areas would probably be reduced in the long term," Sinclair said.

Sinclair, the first aboriginal judge appointed in Manitoba, spent six years documenting the dark legacy of Canada's residential schools — a church-run, government-funded assimilation program that existed in Canada from the 1870s to 1996.

#### **94 TRC recommendations**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, borne out of the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, issued 94 calls to action at the end of its mandate touching on a host of problems including health and education.

The Grits have promised to implement all suggestions presented by the commission, though economists warn that the recommendations have not been fully costed.

The government will likely need a more thorough analysis of the financial implications, Sinclair noted, but he said costs will only balloon if Canada doesn't take a completely different approach to issues like aboriginal incarceration, child welfare and health.

Last week, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found the federal government has underfunded child welfare services on reserve — a problem that will take at least \$200-million more a year to remedy, according to First Nations advocate Cindy Blackstock.

"From the government's perspective, it probably is the shot across the bow that is going to cause them to develop an approach to funding on reserve that ... require them to be more consistent in their approach to funding," Sinclair said.

In January, Morneau indicated helping aboriginal people will be a "high priority" in the upcoming budget.

NDP Leader Tom Mulcair said he wants to see the fine print soon.

"(Prime Minister Justin) Trudeau has said that he's going to implement each and every one of them," Mulcair said.

"I'm more than willing to give him that chance but again the budget has got to start providing the money to do that."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/04/intransigence-on-aboriginal-spending-would-cost-more-in-the-long-run-sinclair\\_n\\_9156392.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/04/intransigence-on-aboriginal-spending-would-cost-more-in-the-long-run-sinclair_n_9156392.html)

## **With First Election to BC MLA for a First Nations Woman, Melanie Mark Makes History**

'This is our victory,' says Vancouver byelection winner, while New Dems also take Coquitlam.

By Andrew MacLeod, 3 Feb 2016, TheTyee.ca



Melanie Mark kisses her daughter at her byelection victory party Tuesday evening. Photo by Christopher Cheung.

With Melanie Mark's victory for the NDP in Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, for the first time in the history of British Columbia a First Nations woman has won election as an MLA.

Mark's was one of two wins for the opposition party in a pair of Feb. 2 byelections called to replace MLAs who had resigned to run in the October federal election.

"I am so proud to be Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree, Ojibwa, French and Scottish," Mark told a crowd of supporters at the Heritage Hall on Main Street that included her mother and two daughters. "To now add to my identity, I'm so proud to be your member of the legislature."

Mark received nearly 61 per cent of the votes cast in the byelection. With 5,353 votes, she came ahead of the BC Green Party's Pete Fry with 2,325 votes and the BC Liberal Party's Gavin Dew with 994 votes.

### **'Paddled hard,' says Mark**

"My friends, this isn't my victory, this is our victory," Mark said. "We've paddled hard and strong in unity and solidarity with pride for social justice, economic justice, environmental justice, and it's not going to stop."



Mark talked about seeing five eagles on her final day of campaigning and taking it as a sign of good luck. She asked the crowd to work with her to defeat Premier Christy Clark and the BC Liberals in the next general election, scheduled for May 2017.

"[Mark] has been knocking on doors, meeting people, building relationships and demonstrating to all of you, the people of Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, that they deserve someone in their corner," said NDP leader John Horgan. "They deserve someone that's there for them. Not just when it's convenient, but in the tough times as well."



New NDP MLA Melanie Mark: 'We've paddled hard... and it's not going to stop.' Photo by Christopher Cheung.

In the other byelection, in Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, the NDP's Jodie Wickens beat the BC Liberals' Joan Isaacs by a narrower margin. Wickens received 3,562 votes, about 45 per cent of the total, to Isaacs' 2,936, about 38 per cent.

In an emailed statement, Isaacs thanked her team and said she intends to run in the 2017 general election.

The Green Party's Joe Keithley, the singer and guitarist for punk band D.O.A., trailed with 1,061 votes in Coquitlam-Burke Mountain, about 14 per cent of the total.

### **Byelections unkind, says Lib president**

"Historically, byelections have not been kind to sitting governments of any party," Liberal president Sharon White said in a widely distributed email sent as the vote counts were completed. "Since 1982, the governing party has won two of the last 21 byelections, almost always with a disappointing voter turnout. Today is no different."

Green Party leader Andrew Weaver said in an emailed statement that the low turnout -- about 20 per cent of eligible voters in each riding -- made it a sad day for democracy in the province.

"Voters in B.C. are clearly fed up with 18 years of partisan bickering between the BC NDP and BC Liberals," Weaver said.



New NDP MLA Jodie Wickens won Coquitlam-Burke Mountain with 45 per cent of the vote.

Mark was an official in the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth for eight years.

During the campaign, she told *The Tyee* issues that she would address as MLA include the high number of aboriginal children in government care, the legacies of the residential school system, the investigation of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and the need for better protection of the environment.

Wickens is the executive director of the Autism Support Network and with her husband is raising two boys in Coquitlam. With experience as a professional advocate who helps people navigate the government's systems, she'd bring a strong voice for the community, she told *The Tyee*.

*With files from Christopher Cheung.* 🍌

**Direct Link:** <http://thetyee.ca/News/2016/02/03/Melanie-Mark-Aboriginal-MLA/>

## Aboriginal Sports

### **Aboriginal fans' traditional song for Edmonton Oilers goes viral**

## 'Let's go back to the good old days, let's go back to the Gretzky days': singers, drummers inspire fans

CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 10:04 AM MT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 1:11 PM MT



CBC reporter Min Dhariwal knew there was a great story just waiting to be told when he talked to Rob Alexis before Tuesday's Oilers' game. (CBC)

A group of aboriginal hockey fans who love the Edmonton Oilers have created a new song, which has gone viral online, to honour their favourite team's newest star.

The singers and drummers from the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, west of Edmonton, unveiled their song Tuesday night as Oilers rookie sensation Connor McDavid returned to the ice for the first time since November following an injury.



"We just want to support [the team], because aboriginal people love hockey," said Rob Alexis, a member of the group. "We've been here since the 1980s, and we're still here."

The song, which already has more than 300,000 views on Facebook, harkens back to the team's glory decade, when the Oilers, led by Wayne Gretzky, won four Stanley Cups in five years.

The lyrics, in part, are:

"Let's go back to the good old days, let's go back to the Gretzky days. Go, Oilers, go, you can do it. You've got Connor McDavid, Nuge, Ebs and Hall," they sing, referring to teammates Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Jordan Eberle and Taylor Hall.

The singing and drumming group entertained fans headed into Rexall Place before Tuesday's game, which saw McDavid score a highlight-reel goal and the Oilers beat the Columbus Blue Jackets 5-1.

CBC reporter Min Dhariwal talked with Rob Alexis before the game.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/aboriginal-fans-traditional-song-for-edmonton-oilers-goes-viral-1.3431932>

## First Nations singers shocked by response to Oilers performance

Brenton Driedger

February 04, 2016 01:51 pm



A group of First Nations drummers is as surprised as anyone by their newfound celebrity status.

A video of the Logan Alexis Singers performing their Oilers' song went viral after it was recorded before Tuesday's night game at Rexall Place. The Aboriginal drummers admit they had no idea it would be that popular.

"When we first heard it, we were messing around with the flash mobs a few years ago," says Arnold Alexis, from the Alexis First Nation, before the group performed on 630 CHED's Ryan Jespersen Show. "(We thought) well, go flash mob at an Oiler game when Connor McDavid returns. And it just happened."

"I thought we were just messing around when I first walked up there," says Alexis. "As as I started hitting (my drum), I started praying, because that's what I do. When I pick up

a drum to start hitting it, I don't mess around, I start praying. I started praying for the health of the team, and their mindset and all that.”

“I didn't even have a game ticket or nothing (sic),” laughs Alexis. “After I finished singing, I just walked back to the truck and left.”

The song started coming together a few years ago. John Thomas, a councillor from Enoch Cree Nation, says they recorded it last month, and the CD will be coming out soon.

“I was shocked at the amount of views, the amount of support, and just how it exploded online. It was trending like crazy,” says Thomas.

Thomas says they're very proud, because hockey, specifically the Oilers, is a big part of the local First Nations culture.

“We play hockey, too,” says Thomas. “A lot of our nations — from Enoch, from Alexis, from Frog Lake, all in Treaty Six area — we have a passion for hockey. And that passion flows over into the Edmonton Oilers. Everybody has that dream of one day, they want to play for the Edmonton Oilers.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cknw.com/syn/110/86917/86917>

## **Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources**

### **Alberta First Nations up pressure on province for cut of royalty revenues after review announcement**

National News, Uncategorized | January 30, 2016 by Brandi Morin |



## **Brandi Morin**

### **APTN National News**

Chiefs in Alberta say they will push for a better deal with the province of Alberta despite the announcement by Premier Rachel Notley that a royalty review will bring about few changes in oil and gas revenue structure going forward.

Notley made the announcement on a freeze on royalty sharing Friday in Calgary.

Recommendations from the royalty review panel listed on the government's website include a paragraph stating the province "could" look into discussing revenue sharing with First Nations and Metis.

The issue has been a topic long in contention with First Nations since the signing of the Natural Resource Transfer Act (NRTA) in 1931.

Charlene Houle-White, a council member from Saddlelake Cree Nation in Northern Alberta, attended one of many meetings held last year by the review panel designed to engage Albertans in the process.

She expressed her dismay at the marginalization of First Nations in the oil rich province.

Houle-White said her grandfather signed the NRTA in the 1930's as did other Alberta First Nations without being consulted and have since been left out of profits made on natural resources.

"I went about asking my elders what happened. And I wondered, 'How come we're not rich like the Saudi Arabians? Because this is our oil in this soil. We didn't cede. Our Treaty's say we didn't cede the land that was the depth of the plow,'" said Houle-White. "We are only asking for an equitable share, not to break the Government, only the opportunity to bring our peoples quality of life to a suitable standard. Our people have suffered from non-inclusion for a very long time- please share what we have shared with you. The chance to come out of racist policies which oppress and take from our most important resource, our people."

When the NRTA act came into effect it transferred the jurisdictional rights over lands, waters, and natural resources in Alberta from the Federal Government to the province.

Many First Nations believe the NRTA breached their rights to hunting, fishing, trapping as well as rights to the water and natural resources.

Houle-White said deplorable living conditions in many First Nations in Alberta clash with the prosperity and infrastructure experienced by the rest of the province gained from money made off of natural resources.

“Our roads are bad, we don’t have the money to fix them. And yet we have oil and gas trucks that come onto our lands and we don’t get much back- we get a small piece, that’s all that we ever see for our resources. We have less, we’ve always had less and now we’re saying we don’t want to have less anymore,” she said.

Treaty 6 Grand Chief Tony Alexis also expressed disappointment by the lack of direct engagement with First Nations during the review period.

“It was also disappointing that one needs to get to page 75 of the report in one small paragraph to even acknowledge a mention of the important issue of revenue sharing for First Nations. I believe it is also noteworthy that the Premier did not see it fit to mention the issue in her remarks,” said Alexis.

He added that it is a complex issue happening at a time when the energy industry is experiencing a crisis, however he will hold the government accountable until progress is made in discussing revenue sharing options.

AFN regional Chief Craig Mackinaw is also skeptical of the wording used in the report.

“When they say “could”- it means different things. So I’m not too sure if they’re just saying it just to acknowledge us. I’m not too sure where they’re coming from when they make those kinds of comments. It’s too vague. They need to talk to the chiefs about it. I know the chiefs have brought it at different times to their table. But there needs to be more discussion,” said Mackinaw.

With the NDP government preparing to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) next month while championing building new relationships with Indigenous groups, Mackinaw feels having talks about resource revenue sharing would be an integral step forward.



“I think it is an important part of that process. It will show that they’re following through with their commitment under UNDRIP. And if they (government) do that it will show the bands, chiefs and councils that they’re serious about addressing the relationship with us.”

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/30/alberta-first-nations-up-pressure-on-province-for-cut-of-royalty-revenues-after-review-announcement/>

## **B.C. ski resort gets environmental and First Nations approval**

ANDREW GLEN MCCUTCHEON

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Jan. 29, 2016 6:51PM EST

Last updated Friday, Jan. 29, 2016 10:05PM EST

A controversial ski resort between Vancouver and Whistler has received environmental approval from the British Columbia government and the support of a local First Nation after a process that has been under way for nearly two decades.

Garibaldi at Squamish, a proposed \$3.5-billion all-season resort, on Friday received its environmental certificate, which imposed 40 conditions.

“This is only the first step for this project,” Environment Minister Mary Polak said in an interview. “But this assessment meets the requirements we have for environmental standards and the mitigation of any possible risks.”

The resort, which would have 23 ski lifts, 124 trails, hotels and private residences, has been in the provincial environmental approval system since the late 1990s. The project would cover 2,759 hectares bordering Garibaldi National Park. The proponent says it will create more than 2,500 full-time jobs.

The project is a private operation, backed by Vancouver-based developers Northland Properties, owners of the Revelstoke Mountain Resort, and the Aquilini Investment Group, which owns the Vancouver Canucks.

Concerns were raised about the impact on the local water supply, and the District of Squamish officially opposed the project, questioning its environmental sustainability.

The project received the support of the Squamish Nation, which reached an agreement with the developer for a 10 per cent stake, revenue sharing and employment opportunities. The band also says the project will preserve its members’ ability to exercise their aboriginal rights.

“We’ve been working on this since 2003, and we’re going to continue to be involved, to protect our cultural and environmental values in that area,” Chief Ian Campbell said.

Mr. Cambell said the Squamish Nation is comfortable that environmental and cultural interests will be protected.

The conditions attached to the environmental certificate include monitoring water consumption and limiting the rate of groundwater withdrawal.

Concerns were raised several years ago about that the area's water supply, prompting the provincial government to order studies in 2010.

The original proposal included two 18-hole golf courses, but they were removed to assuage concerns about water use.

The Whistler-Blackcomb resort, which is about 60 kilometres farther from Vancouver, has been one of the most vocal opponents of the Garibaldi proposal, expressing concerns as early as 2008. Resort president David Brownlie wrote to B.C.'s Environmental Assessment office in June, 2015, arguing that the project would have poor terrain and conditions.

"[Garibaldi at Squamish] would damage B.C.'s reputation and undermine its success as a world-class ski destination," the letter said.

A spokesperson for Whistler-Blackcomb was not immediately available to comment on the approval for the resort.

Other nearby organizations were against the project based on environmental factors.

Last month, the District of Squamish unilaterally passed a resolution opposing it.

According to council, although the district supported provincial tourism initiatives, it had concerns about the size and scope, and environmental sustainability. The resolution said the district would not support the certificate, regardless of whether it included conditions.

The province's most recent study of the area's water was released last fall. It found that although supply would be adequate in the wet winter and spring months, groundwater restrictions might be needed in the summer and fall.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-ski-resort-near-squamish-gets-environmental-and-first-nations-approval/article28468568/>

## **B.C. union joins First Nations vowing to use law to fight pipelines**

**LAURA KANE**

VANCOUVER — The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, Feb. 04, 2016 4:38PM EST

Last updated Thursday, Feb. 04, 2016 4:41PM EST

A union representing thousands of British Columbia government workers has signed an accord vowing to oppose pipelines from crossing the territories of 130 First Nations.

The B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union signed a solidarity accord affirming its support of the Save the Fraser declaration, taking aim at the provincial Liberals' handling of resource projects.

The document of indigenous law bans the Northern Gateway pipeline or similar projects from crossing the signatories' territories.

About a third of the union's 65,000 members work in direct government service. Treasurer Paul Finch said Thursday the union supports a recent B.C. Supreme Court ruling that found the province failed in its duty to consult with First Nations on Northern Gateway.

"Governments have a legal and moral responsibility to engage in meaningful consultations with First Nations peoples, to gain their support before projects of this kind proceed," he said.

"So far, the B.C. government has spectacularly failed in this responsibility."

Asked whether the union had concerns about opposing pipelines that could create jobs for British Columbians, Finch said it did not. He said there must be a new approach to how oil and gas projects are assessed in the province.

"We're in favour of resource development projects. They just have to be done right," he said.

"We keep coming again and again into confrontation over these projects. It's very clear that how it's being done is not working."

Finch said union members strongly supported signing the accord and it had been years in the making.

The Northern Gateway pipeline, headed by Calgary-based Enbridge, would carry heavy Alberta oil to B.C.'s north coast and was approved in 2014 by the federal cabinet. First Nations and environmentalists have launched multiple legal challenges that are working their way through the courts.

A judge ruled last month that the B.C. government failed to consult with First Nations on the pipeline, stemming from the province's decision to allow a single environmental assessment process under the National Energy Board rather than conducting a separate provincial review.

The provincial government has formally opposed both Northern Gateway and Kinder Morgan's proposed Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

Saik'uz Chief Stan Thomas of the Yinka Dene Alliance, which spearheaded the declaration, said indigenous laws have guided the way First Nations use their lands and waters for generations and should be respected by all Canadians.

Thomas said the "tide was turning" on Northern Gateway, pointing to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's call for a moratorium on crude oil tankers on B.C.'s north coast.

"All of this is happening because we continue to uphold our laws and because First Nations and non-indigenous people are standing together," he said.

First Nations from across B.C. have signed the declaration, symbolically banning pipelines from crossing large swaths of land that cover nearly the entire province.

The solidarity accord has also been signed by other labour unions including Unifor and the B.C. Teachers' Federation, as well as business, environmental and community groups.

Northern Gateway spokesman Ivan Giesbrecht said 28 First Nations that have signed on as "equity partners" of the project stand to lose about \$1 billion in long-term economic and educational benefits if Trudeau's proposed north coast tanker ban proceeds.

The pipeline is expected to generate \$1.2 billion in tax revenue for B.C. and create over 3,000 construction jobs and 560 long-term jobs in the province, he said, adding a total of 1,150 long-term jobs would be created, including in Alberta.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-union-joins-first-nations-vowing-to-use-law-to-fight-pipelines/article28560613/>

## **Land Claims & Treaty Rights**

### **Ottawa's changes to pipeline approval process not enough, say some First Nations**

National News | January 28, 2016 by APTN National News



### **APTN National News**

**OTTAWA**—Three major First Nation organizations representing chiefs from British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec, said Friday the federal Liberal government's announced changes to the pipeline review process doesn't quite go far enough.

The Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL), the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) issued a statement Thursday saying they want deeper changes to consultation and the environmental assessments of proposed pipeline projects.

Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr and Environment Minister Catherine McKenna unveiled transitional changes to the review process of TransCanada's Energy East and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline projects.

The ministers said the federal government would be directly engaging First Nations in consultation on the projects beyond the regulatory review process led by the National Energy Board (NEB).

The chiefs from the three organizations said the changes do little to improve the NEB, which they consider as simply a "rubber stamper that pays only lip services to the respect for the position for the positions and rights of First Nations."

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the UBCIC, said he was particularly concerned about Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline.

Phillip acknowledged that the Liberal government has said it plans to engage in direct consultation with First Nations once the NEB wraps up its review in May of the pipeline project which will carry Alberta-mined bitumen to Burnaby, B.C.

"Ultimately, how are we any better off today than yesterday as far as the Kinder Morgan project goes?" said Phillip. "What we need is the federal government's willingness to

take no for an answer from First Nations like Tsleil-Waututh Nation who are exercising their sovereign decision-making power.”

AFNQL regional Chief Ghislain Picard said the Liberals should have first consulted with First Nations before unveiling their changes to the pipeline approval process.

“We could have signaled ahead of time that such reforms did not go nearly far enough,” said Picard. “At a time when First Nations are already suffering major climate change related impacts to their ways of life, one of our main concerns is that the new climate test that these pipelines will be subjected to will not sufficiently reflect the urgency with which we need to reduce emissions and get off fossil fuels.”

Carr said Wednesday that the Liberal government would be consulting with First Nations before introducing an overhaul of the regulatory approval process of pipelines and other large natural resource projects. He said the changes announced Wednesday will remain in place until the federal government unveils its permanent retooling of the approval process.

AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak said some of his organization’s member First Nations were “shocked” the Liberals did not apply the additional consultation promised for the Energy East and Trans Mountain projects to Enbridge’s proposed Line 3 project.

“The threat of climate change is such that the real issue is whether we will survive as a civilization and whether there will even be an economy left to speak of,” said Nepinak.

The Iroquois Caucus, which represents the communities of Kanesatake, Kahnawake, Akwesasne, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Six Nations, Tyendinaga and the Wahta Mohawks, also issued a statement saying while they still oppose Energy East, the communities are still looking forward to consultation with Ottawa.

“We are willing to meet with the senior Crown representatives to participate in the development of a meaningful process that is consistent with the historic Two-Row relationship with the Haudenosaunee and the legal obligations of the Crown to address and accommodate First Nation concerns including the shortcomings of the (NEB) process,” said the statement.

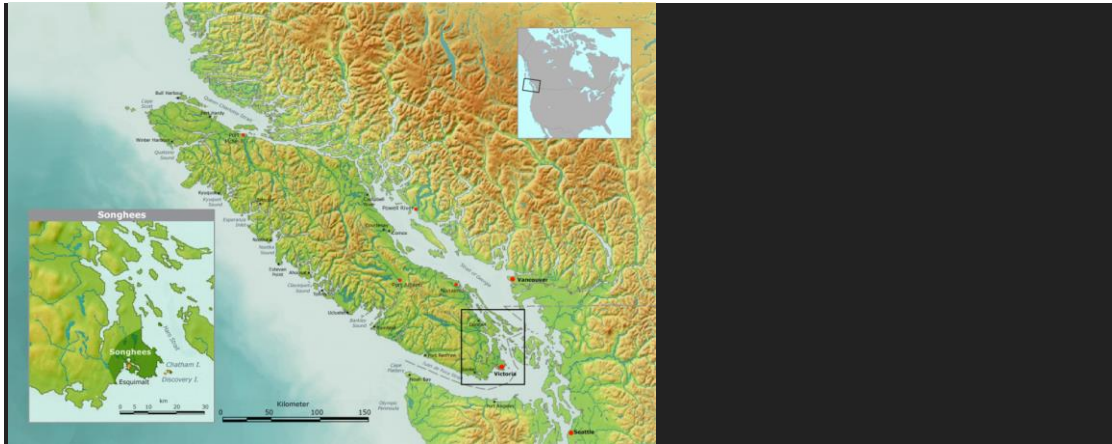
In an interview with *APTN* during the last federal election campaign, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said he believed First Nations had the right to reject projects on their territory.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/28/ottawas-changes-to-pipeline-approval-process-not-enough-say-some-first-nations/>

# B.C. Supreme Court grants First Nations' bid to call multiple expert witnesses

The Songhees and Esquimalt nations cited complex issues in upcoming treaty case

by Martin Dunphy on January 29th, 2016 at 2:12 PM



The Supreme Court of British Columbia has granted a First Nation's application to call a dozen expert witnesses in an upcoming trial.

Judge J. Keith Bracken, in reasons for judgement released on January 21 in *Sam v. British Columbia*, allowed the application by the Songhees Nation of southern Vancouver Island to call 12 expert witnesses in a scheduled unspecified trial.

The Songhees action was supported by the Esquimalt Nation.

Both First Nations are plaintiffs in a case that Bracken described in his reasons as involving “treaties that were allegedly made between the imperial government and the plaintiffs in the mid-1800s. The trials are expected to take several months and the court will hear many witnesses and will be required to review numerous historical documents.”

The B.C. government opposed the application; the Canadian government took no position.

Bracken wrote that the B.C. government's objection was “based on the fact that several of the expert reports overlap and are thus unnecessary and repetitive”. Bracken, though, noted the “unique nature of the cases at issue here”.

He wrote: “However, the evidence will canvas many complex areas of history: geography, botany, anthropology, archeology, ethno-history, genealogy,



ethno-ecology, law and the culture of indigenous peoples and their understanding of the terms of the treaty as well as the authenticity of documents. The issue is further complicated because there is an agreement between all parties that the evidence of each of the plaintiffs may be relied upon by the other.”

In its application, Bracken noted, the Songhees Nation said that “expert evidence in aboriginal cases is particularly important”, citing a 2009 B.C. Supreme Court case, *Ahousaht Indian Band v. Canada (Attorney General)*:

*The task facing courts in aboriginal rights and title cases is one usually reserved for historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and ethnographers. Courts have sufficient difficulty determining what happened a few months or years ago, never mind a few centuries ago. The main fact that the plaintiffs seek to prove is that they traded fish prior to contact with European culture, and that that activity is analogous to the modern activity of commercial fishing. The majority of the evidence at trial concerning the aboriginal rights claim was led to prove this fact.*

With regard to Section 7 of the Canada Evidence Act, which seems to limit the number of expert witnesses to five, Bracken wrote: “It is my view that s. 7 of the Act limits the number of experts to be called in any action to five experts per party and not five experts per issue.”

Bracken concluded in his reasons: “I accept that allowing Songhees to call 12 experts may result in some duplication among the evidence given by the experts, but any abuse can be managed by restriction of the evidence during examination and cross-examination of the expert wherever appropriate. I believe that while there cannot be a simple abrogation of the way a trial is normally conducted just because the case involves aboriginal claims, some accommodation should be granted to allow the issues to be fully explored.

“Therefore, the application is allowed and Songhees will be allowed to call 12 expert witnesses at the trial of this action.”

Neither Songhees Chief Robert Sam nor Esquimalt Chief Andrew Thomas (Seenupin) could be contacted for an interview at the time of publication.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/627596/bc-supreme-court-grants-first-nations-bid-call-multiple-expert-witnesses>

## The Binds that Tie

Mike Myers

1/31/16

After nine years the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal has made a landmark and far reaching decision about the quality of Indigenous child welfare. The really good news is that this is a legally binding decision, one that cannot be easily avoided or brushed off by the federal or provincial governments.

What I find encouraging is that there may now be a venue to which Indigenous nations and peoples can bring their issues with the settler governments and have an opportunity to get a fair and binding decision. This has simply not existed before.

Up until the 1950s Indigenous nations and peoples weren't allowed to bring court cases forward without the approval of either government. Our nations and peoples could not hire our own lawyers. Any lawyer we wanted had to be approved by the Indigenous bureaucracies – this doesn't really change until the 1970s.

In 1948 the U.S. created the Indian Land Claims Commission and immediately made it impossible for Indigenous nations to regain land by limiting any settlement to monetary compensation only. If we want land back we have to use the monetary compensation to buy land from “willing sellers” and then the Department of the Interior will take this land into trust in our behalf.

No Indigenous government or person in their right mind has ever trusted the settler courts. We have been forced to take important issues into these traps because there has not been any other venue.

When the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal was created it was met with our ages old skepticism that this could be a good thing. After all it was being created by the settler government, how much could we really trust it?

Well now it appears there may be a new venue, but only in Canada. A quick Google to find an American Human Rights Commission or Tribunal is very disappointing. What does come up is the federal level Civil Rights Commission and a whole bunch of state, county and city human rights commissions. But not a national one.

To be perfectly clear there is a huge difference in the words “tribunal” and “commission”. Tribunal says right from the start someone or something is going to be on trial. But a commission pretty much tells you there will be studies and research that lead to a non-binding conclusion.

This binding aspect holds such monumental importance. As reported in the Canadian Press: “The quasi-judicial body published its findings nine years after a complaint from the Assembly of First Nations and The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, which argued the federal government failed to provide First Nations children with the same level of services that exist elsewhere.

In its legally binding decision, the tribunal found First Nations are adversely impacted by the services provided by the government and, in some cases, denied services as a result of the government's involvement.

‘The panel acknowledges the suffering of those First Nations children and families who are or have been denied an equitable opportunity to remain together or to be reunited in a timely manner,’ the ruling said.”

What has been found is not limited to child welfare concerns but cuts across the board into every aspect of federal control of Indigenous governance and lives. The next challenge should go after the federally supported schools that are equally chronically underfunded and denied any chance to grow and improve.

Hand-in-hand with education needs to be a housing challenge. The incredibly disastrous housing found in Indigenous territories is most certainly not of our design or desire.

Now comes the test of the new federal government in Canada and all of its rhetoric about nation-to-nation and honoring Indigenous rights. Here is the opportunity to do the right thing, not just talk about it.

There is already grumbling from their right wing about the costs and how this is going to upset their economic plans and agendas if they have to divert money to addressing this issue. But what they, and most Canadian settlers, are missing is that this is a strong lesson in the real cost of occupying a peoples’ lands, dominating their resources, and maintaining the colonial legacy created by the settler invasion of Turtle Island.

The right to care for our children and utilize resources to empower their future is a fundamental inherent right. A right that wasn’t surrendered or relinquished in any treaty. All the treaties are totally silent about this. But the Crown has always depended on the Doctrine of Discovery as the authority for their efforts to socially engineer us and as they once said, “Kill the Indian, but save the man”.

The education of our children is also an inherent right. There are clauses in several treaties where the Crown commits itself to provide schools, equipment and teachers. In some of the treaties it is stated, “..when the Indians so desire...” Our assumption has always been that such an education would, at minimum, be equal to what they provide to their own children.

Now the true costs of being an arrogant, racist settler filled with misconceptions of superiority are coming on to the table. Every occupying power has learned this lesson over the centuries and it is a lesson that brought down some of the empire builders because in the long run it is unsustainable.

Oppression and suppression destroy both the oppressed and the oppressor. The energy, determination and costs of maintaining the systems required for oppression are drained and eventually begin to collapse. On the other side the energy, determination and costs to resist the oppression are equally devastating. What is most confusing is that both sides know this but are unable to find a way to undo the system.

Every once in a while an opportunity arises that if seized can begin to bring peace to both sides. This ruling gives rise to such an opportunity.

The settler state has the opportunity to step away from its history and negative legacy. It has the opportunity to begin to build new systems that are actually based on equality and fairness. The oppressed have the opportunity to be innovative and creative in devising new approaches, new ways and bold enough to bring their best to the table.

Canada can try to wriggle their way out of this binding order but the only way off the hook for them is for us to allow them to wriggle out. For the first time in a long time we've got some leverage and advantage in our relations with the settlers. Let's not squander this moment but use it to springboard to greater sovereignty, empowered authority and jurisdiction, and the creation of the best future we pass to our children and grandchildren.

*Mike Myers is the founder and CEO of Network for Native Futures, a Native non-profit that works with Indigenous nations, communities and organizations internationally. The network's mission is to support sustainable development and nation re-building through providing of technical assistance, training and consulting.*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/31/binds-tie>

## **Junior miner takes B.C. to court over land transfer**

IAIN MARLOW

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Jan. 31, 2016 6:34PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Jan. 31, 2016 7:16PM EST

A junior miner with offices in Vancouver and Beijing is taking the government of British Columbia to court over a treaty-related transfer of land to a First Nations group that the company says should concern all resource companies in the province.

China Minerals Mining Corp. and its subsidiary Cassiar Gold Corp. have filed a petition with the Supreme Court of British Columbia that seeks to reverse a portion of the B.C. government's transfer of Crown land near the Yukon border in northern B.C. to the Kaska Dena Council. The transfer was done through an incremental treaty agreement, an arrangement in which the province can grant treaty-like benefits to First Nations groups in advance of a formal modern treaty — a process that could take many years in a province where most First Nations never signed treaties.

China Minerals, which holds mineral tenure on a portion of the land transferred to a company owned by the Kaska Dena and has invested about \$36-million in exploration and drilling, said the company was not consulted by the government in the process and that the Kaska Dena plan to develop a “run-of-river” hydroelectric project on the site that is incompatible with developing existing mine sites into active gold mines.

“It’s effectively terminated the company’s ability to proceed, without knowing in advance,” says Joan Young, a partner at McMillan LLP in Vancouver. “I think any resource company should be concerned about that.... It was effectively expropriated.”

The case, in some ways, adds a slightly new twist to the at-times confusing regulatory situation on the West Coast, where the natural resource sector is often engaged in a push-and-pull battle with First Nations groups, who want to protect their way of life and traditional lands, and environmentalists. Several high-profile projects – such as proposed pipelines and liquefied-natural-gas export terminals – have wound up in a state of near-permanent limbo as executives face regulatory reviews and entrenched opposition in a province where very few can agree on the balance between exploiting natural resources and preserving B.C.’s natural wild beauty.

Since many resource projects across B.C. are situated or proposed on traditional First Nations territory, the incremental treaty negotiation process seems to have added another question mark in an already fraught process, at least for China Minerals, which is listed on the TSX Venture Exchange. B.C. now has 18 such agreements with 20 First Nations.

Edward Hill, a spokesman for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, says B.C. acted “in accordance with all legal and statutory obligations and regulations” in striking the deal with the Kaska Dena, and that these incremental agreements are part of a broader process that will “build goodwill between the First Nation and the province, create incentives to reach further treaty milestones and provide increased certainty over land and resources.”

Mr. Hill says the province, which financially supports First Nations in pursuing hydroelectric and other green energy projects, considers the overlap between China Minerals’ tenure and the treaty lands as small – 5.6 hectares out of 58,900 hectares.

In earlier negotiations with China Minerals, outlined in e-mails submitted to the court, George McRae, a senior negotiator with the ministry, had rejected the company’s two suggestions for a resolution: That the ministry either “not effect” the transfer of lands or else enter into a legally binding contract with China Minerals to compensate the company for potential losses. “We are unable to accept this proposal given that the province has acted in accordance with its legal obligations,” Mr. McRae wrote.

One B.C. lawyer who regularly helps Chinese resource companies in B.C. says navigating First Nations issues is one of the top issues facing Chinese companies in the province, along with regulatory delays and a lack of infrastructure.

“This is similar to expropriation or nationalization, in a sense; it’s not as if you can take that into consideration in an agreement,” the lawyer said. “This means additional due diligence and figuring out the lay of the land.”

The chair of the Kaska Dena Council, as well as a chief of the Dease River First Nation, declined to comment.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/china-minerals-takes-bc-to-court-over-land-transfer-to-first-nations-group/article28474788/>

## Alberta failing to protect aboriginal rights in oilsands: report

By Bob Weber The Canadian Press



The Athabasca River in northern Alberta.

EDMONTON – The Alberta government’s attempt to balance competing interests in the oilsands region has failed to protect aboriginal rights, lands and health from industrial development, says an unreleased report.

Instead, the document concludes the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, which came into force in 2012, has been used by both industry and government to erode traditional land use in favour of economic interests.

“What Alberta said it would do and what it actually did are very different things,” says the review panel report, obtained by The Canadian Press.

A government-appointed panel was struck in 2014 under a provision in provincial law after six area First Nations complained that the land use plan violated their treaty rights.

The inquiry report has been complete since July, but has never been released. Its findings are damning.

The panel agrees with the Athabasca Chipewyan that the plan doesn’t protect aboriginal culture. It concurred with the Mikisew Cree that business was given priority over their constitutional rights.

The report says the Cold Lake First Nation is right that the plan creates new conservation areas without reference to traditional use. It finds justified Fort McKay’s concerns that the plan has few protection measures and no thresholds for action.

It upheld the Onion Lake Cree's contention that the plan has no measures to manage traditional land use.

And it agrees with Chipewyan Prairie Dene that the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan has been turned against the groups it was meant to protect, eroding existing traditional use rights and blocking the creation of new areas for such use.

The panel discarded government arguments — made by the previous Progressive Conservative administration — that such issues were beyond the review's jurisdiction.

The panel made several recommendations.

It's "critical" that a health study on contaminants in the Athabasca River be conducted as soon as possible, it said. A baseline human-health study should also be conducted.

As well, Alberta should stop examining development on a project-by-project basis.

"The regulatory regime must look at the overall proliferation of resource development projects and the impact of such major developments on the people living in that area," the panel said.

The report should raise questions about the oilsands projects that have been approved since the plan came into force, said Eriel Deranger, spokeswoman for the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation.

"The government knew very well that the First Nations were in the process of challenging (the plan) and yet it was still used as a piece of policy to justify projects. It puts into question any projects now that may be given more leeway because they fall into a region designated as a resource priority zone."

Martin Olszynski, a University of Calgary professor of resource law, said the report "validates almost entirely First Nations concerns."

He said it also demonstrates critics were right that the government's plan was poorly implemented and almost entirely opaque.

Environment Minister Shannon Phillips acknowledged the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan needs work, but said her government won't start over.

"There are a lot of babies in this particular bathwater and it is not in the public interest to completely scrap the process. What is in the public interest is to hear loud and clear what is said about the relationship with indigenous people and work together collaboratively in order to improve on those very clear shortcomings."



Phillips said there are still ways First Nations can be involved in already approved projects to mitigate their concerns. She added the government will consider the health and environmental studies called for in the report once it is tabled in cabinet.

“These are difficult files,” she said.

“There’s a lot of things we’ve inherited as a government. Are we particularly pleased at this state of affairs? No.”

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2492798/alberta-failing-to-protect-aboriginal-rights-in-oilsands-report/>

## Trudeau backs away from election pledge on First Nation veto

National News | February 4, 2016 by APTN National News

### **APTN National News**

**EDMONTON**—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appeared to back away Wednesday from an election pledge that First Nations would have a veto over natural resource projects on their territories.

Trudeau was in Edmonton to meet with Alberta Premier Rachel Notley whose provincial economy has been crippled by plummeting oil prices.

Alberta’s economic woes are also being felt across the country and it has increased pressure on Ottawa to back pipelines that will move Alberta-mined bitumen to tidewater.

During a joint press conference with Notley, Trudeau was asked whether he would still stick to his pledge that a First Nation’s no meant “no” on TransCanada’s proposed cross-country Energy East pipeline project and Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline project in British Columbia.

The prime minister responded saying that he was committed to a “renewed relationship” with First Nations that “respect inherent and treaty rights.” He said the federal Liberal government looked to “First Nations and Indigenous peoples as partners in all that happens in this land.”

In an *APTN* virtual town hall held during the election campaign Trudeau was asked by anchor **Cheryl McKenzie** whether a no would “mean no under your government?”

Trudeau responded, “Absolutely.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/04/trudeau-election-pledge-on-first-nation/>

# End of Great Bear Rainforest grizzly hunt to cost B.C. First Nations millions

BY DIRK MEISSNER, THE CANADIAN PRESS FEBRUARY 4, 2016



People gather to raise awareness and to protest the grizzly bear trophy hunt in British Columbia during a rally in North Vancouver on Jan. 20, 2014.

VICTORIA - New information reveals ending the trophy hunt for grizzly bears in British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest will cost millions of dollars, and in the meantime hunters will still be able to set their sights on the bruins.

Premier Christy Clark announced a landmark deal earlier this week to limit logging and end the commercial grizzly hunt on the central coast, which is home to rare, white spirit bears and 1000-year-old cedar forests.

First Nations, environmentalists and hunters said Wednesday there is no target date to end the hunt, and its demise requires negotiations over hunting rights that are destined to cost millions of dollars.

Before the trophy hunt ends, agreements must be reached to purchase lucrative hunting-tenure licences from outfitters who charge non-resident hunters US\$25,000 to shoot a grizzly.

"Effectively, she announced nothing," said Pacific Wild co-founder Ian McAllister. "She wished non-profits like ourselves and the Coastal First Nations good luck with purchasing the remaining licences. It's unaffordable. This really should be coming from the province."

The government has since issued statements, clarifying the hunt's end would be "gradual."

"The province has reached an agreement with Coastal First Nations that, contingent on Coastal First Nations' acquisition of guide territories within their traditional territory, the commercial grizzly bear hunt in the Great Bear Rainforest will end," said Steve Thomson, minister of forests, lands and natural resource operations, in a statement.

Non-residents who come to B.C. from outside Canada must hire a guide outfitter to trophy hunt in the province. Resident hunters, whose primary home is in B.C., will still be permitted to hunt grizzlies and other animals in the Great Bear Rainforest.

Guide outfitter Peter Klaui said he is prepared to sell his tenure-hunting licence.

"Everything has its price," said Klaui, owner of North Coast Adventures for 20 years.

He said his hunting territory spans two-million hectares on the southern edge of the Great Bear Rainforest, and his current licence allows the harvesting of 23 grizzlies over five years.

"If you just do the amortization, especially now with U.S. dollars," said Klaui. "Can you imagine, I mean a grizzly hunt is \$45,000 Canadian."

The North Coast Adventures website includes the testimonial of a Spanish hunter who shot the largest grizzly in Canada in 2008 at Apple River near Powell River. The grizzly weighed more than 340 kilograms and is listed as the 13th largest in North America.

Over the past decade, the Raincoast Conservation Foundation has paid about \$2 million to buy three trophy licences that cover 2.7 million hectares in the Great Bear Rainforest. The rainforest's total estimated area is about 6.4 million hectares.

Now, instead of hunters paying thousands to shoot a grizzly, tourists spend huge dollars to photograph and view the beasts in the wild.

Brian Falconer, marine-operations manager for the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, said trophy-licence policy stipulates a hunt must occur, which leads to some unique interpretations on his wilderness tours.

"We're required still to do those hunts," said Falconer. "So we go through all of the motions. We buy grizzly tags for our hunters. As I put it, 'we just don't seem to be able to find the perfect bear people want to shoot.'"

The Great Bear Rainforest agreement between First Nations, environmental groups, forest companies and the B.C. government protects from logging 85 per cent of the largest, intact temperate rainforest in the world.

Nine area First Nations, who comprise the Coastal First Nations, want to end the commercial grizzly hunt in their traditional territories.

The First Nations were part of a recent court case that saw National Hockey League defenceman Clayton Stoner plead guilty to shooting without a permit a grizzly known as Cheeky.

Coastal First Nations spokesman Doug Neasloss said talks are underway between the First Nations and guide outfitters to buy two grizzly hunting-tenure licences, and aboriginals are preparing to raise the necessary money through a fundraising campaign.

"I think the writing is on the wall, and I think basically trophy hunting is out the door," Neasloss said.

Not every First Nation sees it that way.

Neasloss acknowledged the nearby Nisga'a Nation recently purchased a Great Bear Rainforest tenure licence and may plan their own trophy-hunting operations.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/sports/Great+Bear+Rainforest+grizzly+hunt+cost+First+Nations+millions/11697378/story.html#ixzz3zc8U4Id1>

## **Editorial: First Nations do not have veto over Petronas' Pacific NorthWest LNG project**

VANCOUVER SUN FEBRUARY 3, 2016



Looking across Flora Bank at low tide to the Pacific NorthWest LNG site on Lelu Island, in the Skeena River estuary near Prince Rupert.

We have not yet reached a point in the evolution of aboriginal rights in B.C. whereupon a formal declaration, conjured by First Nations organizations, can put the kibosh on important, wealth-creating development projects. And that is something all British Columbians can be grateful for.

The “Lelu Island Declaration,” announced last week by two aboriginal chiefs (the president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and the head of Friends of Wild Salmon), is aimed at scotching Petronas’ \$11.4-billion Pacific NorthWest LNG project.

The development involves construction of an export terminal on Lelu Island on the north coast and would be a tremendous boost to B.C.’s economy. Accordingly, the province has been working hard to bring it to fruition at a time when the industry faces daunting international competition and weak prices.

The Petronas project has further importance in that it would launch the industry in B.C. It is hoped other such projects — some 20 are in the pipeline — would follow.

Pacific NorthWest LNG, of course, must pass muster environmentally. And to that end, it is undergoing a review by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency. This is the way our system works.

No doubt, the review will take into account concerns being expressed by native groups in the area about the eelgrass beds on Flora Bank which nurture juvenile salmon.

The Lax Kw’alaams First Nation last year voted to oppose the project. Although some in the community have since expressed hope that a suspension bridge could address their concerns.

Moreover, other First Nations groups in the area are supportive of the environmental assessment process.

So it is premature and high handed of the chiefs, and Friends of Wild Salmon, to unilaterally declare: “Lelu Island and Flora Bank ... have been declared permanently protected from industrial development.”

The areas, asserts the declaration, “are hereby protected for all time, as a refuge for wild salmon and marine resources.”

Further, “nations are united from the headwaters of the Skeena River to the ocean. Together they will fight this to the end.”

That is all well and good, as long as they do so within the law, in the same way those supporting the project have the right to fight to the end to have the Petronas project proceed.

The new “declaration” will help its sponsors snare some media attention, but is otherwise meaningless.

First Nations have not established legal title to the affected terrain, which could give them further influence.

As things stand, federal law must prevail, and the Trudeau government will make its decision on the LNG project based on the greater good.

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.vancouversun.com/editorial+first+nations+have+veto+over+petronas+pacific+northwest+project/11695900/story.html>

## **Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women**

### **Inquiry into missing women must be more than political theatre**

GARY MASON

The Globe and Mail (includes correction)

Published Friday, Jan. 29, 2016 6:00AM EST

Last updated Friday, Jan. 29, 2016 12:56PM EST

When justice ministers from across Canada met recently in Quebec City, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s promised inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was at the top of the agenda. Federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould was particularly interested in the perspective of her B.C. counterpart, Suzanne Anton, given the province’s recent experience with a similar probe.

That, of course, was the Oppal Commission, headed up by former B.C. attorney-general Wally Oppal, which looked into the disappearance of scores of women, mostly aboriginal, from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside starting in the late-1970s. Many of them were victims of mass murderer Robert Pickton.

Mr. Oppal's report led to 63 recommendations, many focused on the behaviour of the Vancouver Police Department. The force was criticized for the lack of concern it demonstrated toward those who had vanished, a disregard many attributed to the dim view the police held of the poor, often drug-addled aboriginal women who called the Downtown Eastside home.

Despite Mr. Oppal's best efforts, many in the aboriginal community were not pleased with his commission. Some felt it was not inclusive enough, saying it ignored too many points of view. Others felt the most important thing it accomplished was telling the story of the women themselves – before their lives took a terrible turn.

Which brings us to Ms. Wilson-Raybould's challenge. What does she do with her inquiry that will ensure it produces something worthwhile, and not just an expensive vehicle for people to vent?

In Quebec City, Ms. Anton said it should examine the "economic circumstances of the women" involved. If their financial conditions were better, the minister reasoned, they might not have been vulnerable to predators.

Let's hope this suggestion doesn't typify the quality of input Ms. Raybould-Wilson received. We do not need an inquiry to tell us this. We know the economic circumstances in which most of these women, today and yesterday, find themselves – and they are not good. It is a crisis that every federal government for the past 60 years has recognized but has mostly failed to do anything about, despite some honest efforts.

We know, too, about the rampant drug and alcohol use, violence and depression that plagues many aboriginal communities. We saw it play out in La Loche, Sask. We know about the physical abuse native women endure and from which they routinely flee. We know that's why many of them, some just young teenagers, end up on the downtown streets of big cities, in many cases selling their bodies to eat. This has often been the prelude to their demise.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, which produced 94 recommendations, dove to unparalleled depths in examining the impact residential schools had on generations of indigenous people. And we know that experience has undeniable links to the unconscionable circumstances in which many of our indigenous people find themselves today. We know all this. We know unemployment is high in many First Nations communities and child welfare services are insufficient, and that these factors are also, in their own way, tethered to the MMIW phenomenon. We know that education is the key to lifting many aboriginal women from a pitiful cage of despair and desperation.



Ms. Wilson-Raybould knows this. She knows, too, that aboriginal people in this country have been studied to death. There really is no great mystery as to why indigenous women can be at risk of going missing; the answers lie on the reserves and aboriginal communities themselves. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recognized the direness of the situation and the difficulty involved in fixing it. Its recommendations cover almost every aspect of aboriginal life.

The minister's challenge is to tell us something we don't already know. Failing that, the MMIW inquiry is going to be a costly but ultimately political exercise designed to make us feel less guilty about what is taking place. The government is on it! Something is being done! In the end, however, it will be of little true value and won't make us feel better for long.

*EDS NOTE: The first sentence has been clarified to correct an editing error.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/inquiry-into-missing-women-must-be-more-than-political-theatre/article28442341/>

## **Carolyn Bennett says pan-aboriginal approach to MMIW inquiry won't work for Inuit**

**Local wisdom and traditional knowledge from Inuit will be taken into account for inquiry**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, CBC News Posted: Jan 29, 2016 5:09 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 29, 2016 5:18 PM CT



'A lot of people felt they've been handling this on their own for a long time and now they're no longer alone,' said Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett was in Iqaluit Friday, meeting with families of missing and murdered indigenous women to enlist their input on the upcoming inquiry.

"A lot of people felt they've been handling this on their own for a long time and now they're no longer alone," Bennett told reporters.

Approximately 50 people from Nunavut and across the Territories of Northern Québec, Northern British Columbia, Northern New Brunswick, and Ottawa participated in the Iqaluit session.

"From Nunavik, to Pond, to Iqaluit there's a community now of people who have shared this and know they're no longer alone," Bennett said.

The minister met privately with families throughout the day. She said the meetings confirmed that the situation for Inuit in the North is unique.



"The families involved, some of them waited for a long time for closure and court cases take long sometimes," said James Eetoolook, the Vice-President of Nunavut Tunngavik. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

"We learned that a lot of them really had felt very much alone before this," Bennett said.

"Here, more than other places, people feel very grateful for this first opportunity to tell their stories and to share their pain and their grief."

Bennett said what works in the south may not be ideal for addressing the North's issues with violence against women.

"When we come here we know a pan-Canadian, pan-aboriginal approach is not going to work," said Bennett.

When designing the process for the inquiry, Bennett said she will take into account local wisdom and traditional knowledge to ensure that Inuit women's needs are addressed.

## **Root causes of violence**

While Bennett acknowledged the call from organizations like Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada for social programs such as housing as a means of addressing violence against women, she also stressed the importance of the inquiry.

"We have to do both, we have to get these immediate things in place, in terms of housing and shelters and the things that Nunavummiut need," she said, adding it was also important to examine violence and the root causes of violence.

The families were given orientation session throughout yesterday in preparation for meetings with the minister.

"The families involved, some of them waited for a long time for closure and court cases take long sometimes," said Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. vice president James Eetoolook.

Eetoolook also stressed the need for counselling and services to assist families throughout this process.

For the pre-inquiry, 16 counselors were on site to assist the families, 13 of which spoke various dialects of Inuktitut.

A date has not been set for the next phase of the inquiry, however Bennett says she hopes that it will take place as soon as possible.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/carolyn-bennett-says-pan-aboriginal-approach-to-mmiw-inquiry-won-t-work-for-inuit-1.3426222>

## **Pig Girl takes on issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women**

**Montreal production brings story of missing and murdered women to the stage**

By Jeanette Kelly, CBC News Posted: Jan 30, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 30, 2016 7:00 AM ET



Reneltta Arluk plays the role of "The Dying Woman," in Pig Girl. (CBC)

A new Montreal production aims to serve as a wake-up call about violence against women and particularly to violence against aboriginal women.

Colleen Murphy, a Governor General's Award-winning playwright, has penned a four-character play called *Pig Girl* to explore what she calls "all aspects of the same horror."

Each of the fictionalized characters — The Dying Woman, The Killer, The Cop and The Sister — offer up their own experience of the same events in the context of the Robert Picton case.

Picton was a pig farmer in B.C. who was convicted in 2007 of second-degree murder in the deaths of six women.

**Imago Theatre**, a company specializing in telling women's stories, is staging the play in Montreal with aboriginal actor, Reneltta Arluk in the role of The Dying Woman.

I sat down with Murphy to discuss her play and her intention in writing it.



Colleen Murphy's play examines the experiences of four fictionalized characters in the context of the Robert Picton case. (CBC)

## What inspired this play?

I wanted to think about and imagine very much a woman caught up in this situation. I wanted to imagine what she would do and how she would fight against the terribleness and the hopelessness of the situation, and how she would fight with courage — how she was heroic and how she was not just a victim.

She was a heroine and she was saying, "No, I refuse this." That's how it began in my guts.

## Why the title *Pig Girl*?

That's how it came to me. It's an ironic title. I don't like irony but it is an ironic title.

These women were treated as animals so the title, even though it's not pretty and kind of provocative, it is ironic.

## **Why the choice of four characters to tell the story?**

They are each human beings and there is The Dying Woman, who will die. She knows that and she has a full life and many dreams. There is The Killer and there is no question about it, guys like this don't just do these things out of the sky. Things happen to them. They grow up in the same society we all do, so he is a human being, he does terrible, terrible things.

The Sister is a human being who will forever till she dies look for her sister. This is a form of death.

The Cop, you know, is an asshole but a human being, right. He comes to understand that he was blind and what he did cost lives but he is still a human being. So I tried to put four human beings together in two different time frames and to imagine what this feels like, and to offer that to the audience. We can all read about it but, how it feels, that was very important to me.

## **What was your intention in writing the play?**

To wake people up. And I would say white people. I think indigenous people know what's going on. They've known what's going on forever. As a writer I get very, very involved in a character.

I don't really think about messaging. But when you put your pen down, when you've finished it and you think, 'Oh my God, oh my God,' and yeah it's a kind of a wake-up call, and I think theatre is a great place to do that because it's live. People are breathing on the stage you can't just turn it off and go get a bag of chips.

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I also spoke to Reneltta Arluk, an indigenous actor who plays The Dying Woman. Here's an excerpt of that conversation.

## **Why did you want this role?**

I think she's incredible, I think she's resilient. I think she's smart. I always say when you look at the headlines, about our missing and murdered, you often read sex worker, indigenous, homeless, addicted and then you never look beyond that headline of who that person was, and this is an incredible opportunity where you see her and you can judge her. But then you hear her story through The Sister and through herself and her experiences and you peel off the layers so that person is not just a statistic anymore. That person is a person who lived a great life and becomes more than a victim and that is why I'm thankful to be part of this process.

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*Listen to Colleen Murphy, Reneltta Arluk and director Micheline Chevrier in conversation on Cinq à six, Saturday, Jan. 30 at 5 p.m. ET on CBC Radio One.*

*Pig Girl plays at Centaur Theatre January 30-31 & February 3-6, 2016.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/pig-girl-montreal-play-1.3425378>

## **Lorelei Williams carries family story of missing and murdered indigenous women**

**#MMIW: First Nations woman grew up with ugly reality of what has become an international hashtag**

By Angela Sterritt with Andrew Friesen, CBC News Posted: Feb 03, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 04, 2016 10:15 PM ET



Indigenous advocate Lorelei Williams and Minister Carolyn Bennett met for the first time in Vancouver at meetings where families of missing and murdered indigenous women were consulted about planning the national inquiry. (CBC/Andrew Friesen)

For Lorelei Williams, this story began before she was born, when her aunt, Belinda Williams, went missing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside 40 years ago.

As a 35-year-old woman with roots in both the Skatin and Sts'ailes First Nations, Williams says she was brought into this world with the ugly reality of what has now become an international hashtag: #MMIW.

Williams also lost her young cousin, Tanya Holyk. She went missing in 1996 and was later named as one of **Robert Pickton's victims**.

Helping design the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women was an unexpected turn in Williams' life, one that DNTO producer Andrew Friesen and I are capturing in a new **CBC Doc Project** and DNTO documentary called *The Story She Carries*.



## 'Mistakes were made'

For us, Williams story began at the Winnipeg airport, when I spotted Wally Oppal, the commissioner of the Missing Women's Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) that looked into the murders committed by serial killer Robert Pickton.

In indigenous country, Oppal has acquired somewhat of a pejorative reputation for spearheading what is considered a largely flawed inquiry. But my interview with him cast a different light on the former judge.



Doc-maker and CBC journalist Angela Sterritt interviews Wally Oppal in the Winnipeg airport. (Andrew Friesen/CBC )

Catching my breath after chasing Oppal down at the Vancouver airport, I asked him what he thought of the national inquiry moving forward and how it might be different from the MWCI.

"There were a lot of mistakes made when they didn't fund a lot of the [family and advocacy] groups. We could have learned a lot from those groups if they participated, so I am sympathetic to the groups that walked away."

Later on when I played this tape for Lorelei, she was surprised at what, to her, sounded like someone whose ideas about the inquiry matched hers.

"I'm shocked, everything I am pointing out in my speech [to the Ministers], he said as well. He admitted, 'Don't do the same mistakes that we did.'"

"To hear it coming from his mouth, I always thought, he doesn't get it or realize what we are going through, but it sounds like he does." said Williams.

## Preparing for a national inquiry



The week we set aside to tape our documentary also happened to be the week cabinet ministers Jody Wilson-Raybould, Carolyn Bennett and Patty Hajdu met with families of missing and murdered indigenous women to consult on the plan and design for the national inquiry.

We captured the moment Williams and Bennett met for the first time.



Carolyn Bennett and Lorelei Williams meet for the first time outside a pre-inquiry meeting in Vancouver. CBC producer Andrew Friesen captures the moment. (Angela Sterritt/CBC)

Wearing a T-shirt featuring photos of her missing aunt, Belinda Williams and cousin, Tanya Holyk, Williams told Bennett she was hopeful a national inquiry will help bring closure to her family.

"I feel emotional, I can't believe this is actually happening," said Williams — who reiterated the importance of having family members be a part of the upcoming inquiry.

Bennett agreed. "Lorelei, we're going to need your help to get it right. We know that it's only with the instincts, advice and stories of people like you that we will make sure there will be concrete actions taken."

As Bennett and Williams went upstairs to meet with the coalition, the minister told us that a national inquiry is only the beginning of a very long process.

"We have the responsibility to get on and do the work to make sure that concrete actions are put in place, so that other families don't go through what these families have," said Bennett.

At every meeting, we listened to family members retell difficult stories. For Williams, it means carrying the burden of telling her family members' stories, opening old wounds again and again.

## Brushing off the pain

One of the questions Andrew and I asked each other over and over was, 'How does Lorelei do it?' How does she carry so many stories of death and loss and continue to share her story and other story as a fearless leader? Her answer to us was "It's always about connecting to culture and to spirit."



Seis^lom (Glen Williams) performs a traditional brushing-off ceremony with Lorelei Williams. (Andrew Friesen/CBC)

Williams started a group called *Butterflies in Spirit*, a dance troupe comprised of family members of missing and murdered Indigenous women, to draw attention to the issue. But she was surprised to find that it gave her something back personally as well.

"Ever since I started *Butterflies in Spirit*, ever since I started working in the Downtown Eastside and meeting all these elders ... I realized, wow, my culture is what is going to help me through all of this."

She began exploring her culture, reaching out to spiritual and cultural leaders and connecting to her Skatin and Sts'ailes communities and her Salish, Interior Salish and Coast Salish cultures.

Seis^lom (Glen Williams) was one of the elders she reached out to. During one of this week's ministerial meetings to prep the family members for the pre-inquiry consultation, he was on site, conducting healing ceremonies for those carrying pain.

We witnessed and participated in a traditional Lil'wat brushing-off ceremony. The purpose of the practice is to brush off the negativity absorbed over the course of the day — listening to stories, taking in and experiencing emotions captured in the busy and powerful work that Williams embraces daily.

The pain and suffering many of the families have endured cannot be overstated. Andrew and I listened to heartbreaking stories of survival and loss but also of resilience and courage.

It is hard for me to imagine what many of the family members go through daily.

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*Tune in to our documentary to hear more, tune in to **DNTO**, 3:00 p.m, Feb. 6, CBC Radio One.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/lorelei-williams-the-story-she-carries-1.3406135>

## **First Nations families speak out about missing loved ones at gathering in B.C.**

THE CANADIAN PRESS  
FEBRUARY 3, 2016 11:00 AM

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C. - British Columbia's minister of aboriginal relations says a three-day gathering with family members of murdered and missing women was historic, powerful and moving.

John Rustad says the event in Prince George gave relatives a chance to recount their experiences about the loss of their loved ones.

About 350 family members attended the gathering hosted by the province and several indigenous organizations including the Assembly of First Nations.

Rustad says a repeated theme was that aboriginal women affected by violence often feel invisible and silenced by the system.

He says their concerns will be forwarded to the second National Roundtable on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, to be held in Winnipeg later this month.

An RCMP report has said almost 1,200 aboriginal women have been murdered or have vanished since 1980, at least 16 of them along B.C.'s so-called Highway of Tears between Prince George and Prince Rupert.

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/first-nations-families-speak-out-about-missing-loved-ones-at-gathering-in-b-c-1.2164716#sthash.CPr6lt01.dpuf>

# **Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop**

## **Accord helps reconciliation**

By: Maeengan Linklater

Posted: **01/29/2016 3:00 AM** |

Almost a week ago, Mayor Brian Bowman declared this the year of reconciliation between indigenous people and Winnipeg. The declaration recognizes the historical connection indigenous people have to land the city of Winnipeg now occupies, the legacy of Indian residential schools and its impact within the indigenous community and outlines direction for activities for racial inclusion and diversity.

As a stepping stone, it is an evolutionary continuation of an uneasy relationship between Winnipeg and indigenous peoples and an opportunity to achieve reconciliation between both communities.

In Winnipeg, 68,000 aboriginal people (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) call the city home. There are an estimated 60 to 70 urban aboriginal organizations that provide programs and services for the urban aboriginal community in the fields of education, training and employment, social services, housing, economic development and arts and culture.

There is an existing community-based network in place the City of Winnipeg can engage in order to achieve its policy direction and goals and a willingness of the urban aboriginal community to participate -- if the City of Winnipeg is serious about reconciliation.

Many people don't realize this, but the urban aboriginal community has a proud 65-year history of self-organizing in Winnipeg. Through the efforts and hard work of grassroots leaders, there is an infrastructure of community-based organizations that address the social challenges facing urban indigenous people. These organizations work to keep families together, provide affordable housing, provide education and training to parents and help them find employment when their studies are complete. With a get-it-done attitude and a love and passion for their community, the management and staff of these organizations work with limited and stretched resources to address the enormity of the social deficit urban aboriginal people face on a daily basis.

I would suggest the City of Winnipeg engage with this community, and it should be done with the acknowledgment the urban aboriginal community is self-organized, self-governing and distinct. It is recognized as such through the Canada v. Misquadis case from 2002, when the Federal Court ruled that Human Resources and Skills Development Canada discriminated against the urban aboriginal community; it determined urban aboriginal political organizations could represent the interests of their own people.

In going forward, reconciliation is important, as is the development of an urban aboriginal accord for Winnipeg. This was one of the announcements Mayor Bowman made last week. An accord would promote respectful relations, open dialogue and improvement to indigenous participation in the economy and political life of the city. Strong efforts should be made to engage with representatives of our community to strengthen the accord's development so it reflects the needs of aboriginal people. At the end of the day, the accord should be prepared to address gaps in income, employment, housing and education with a goal to increase our quality of life. At the same time, as a community, we must recognize the limitations of City of Winnipeg. At some point, there will be a bridge between both communities to meet and to work together and to foster a shared vision to walk toward in the spirit of reconciliation.

We should not be afraid to talk with each other.

The year of reconciliation is an opportunity for Winnipeg to be a huge supporter of urban aboriginals. Together, we can shape the policy framework in determining priorities and needs. This policy framework can be shared as well with the provincial and federal governments.

The vision is to create equal opportunity for indigenous citizens of Winnipeg by determining the bread-and-butter issues of aboriginals and to work in partnership to achieve long-term goals.

We are consumers, taxpayers and neighbours. We are human, just like you, and we have dreams -- just like you.

*Maeengan Linklater is originally from Lac Seul First Nation, Ont. He is a member of Winnipeg's urban aboriginal community and has been a citizen of Winnipeg for more than 30 years.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/accord-helps-reconciliation-366954671.html>

## **LETHBRIDGE: A nice nation's nasty blind spot**

**Published** January 30, 2016 - 10:09am

**Last Updated** January 30, 2016 - 10:12am



Morley Googoo, the Assembly of First Nations regional chief for Nova Scotia, hopes public acknowledgement will enlighten the population and act as a compound for change.

Canada has been ranked the No. 2 country in the world according to a survey conducted by the Pennsylvania-based Wharton School of Business.

The survey rated 60 countries in 24 different categories. Germany is No. 1. Britain is No 3.

We feel blessed to live in such a great country.

I got a sense of this on Monday morning when the 6 a.m. CBC Radio World Report switched on and the top story was a piece on how various police forces calibrate speed radar equipment differently.

This could very well be a problem.

But when this is your lead national story on a Monday morning, well, you know you're living in a good place.

But there is a blight on our blessed No. 2 nation. And it's a big one.

Even the survey mentioned it.

First Nations.

Here in Canada, we haven't always been comfortable squaring our good-natured, open-minded and polite self-concept with our treatment of our First Nations people.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission threw a wrench into the works of the "nice" Canadian when it aired horrific stories of Canada's treatment of aboriginal children in residential schools.

Does a nice nation have a long-term policy of kidnapping children from their parents and imprisoning them in schools hundreds of miles away, sometimes abusing them physically, sexually and nutritionally?

No.

And again this week, we had more such discomfort when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that our nation has discriminated against First Nations children living on reserves.

The quasi-judicial ruling found that the federal government of Canada has systematically provided less funding for health and child welfare for children on reserves.

Children who do not live on reserves receive 20-to-30 per cent more funding from provincial governments.

The difference is estimated to be some \$200 million.

This finding is cringe inducing.

For generations, Canadian governments and bureaucrats have denied First Nations children the same health care and child welfare benefits received by other children because it was deemed too expensive.

Among other things, this policy has resulted in the loss of child welfare workers in communities where child suicide was a serious problem.

Some children have ended up in foster care due to lack of services.

To be clear: this was not an innocent oversight or a little boo boo by a bureaucrat.

It was a calculated policy held up and enforced even in the face of recommendations from the auditor general and scrutiny from Amnesty International.

And that isn't all.

Correcting this wrong took a nine-year court battle, led by social worker Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

The federal government spent more than \$5 million in legal fees and launched eight court actions to have the case thrown out on technicalities.

During her long battle, Blackstock was hassled and spied on by the Harper government.

She was barred from an Aboriginal Affairs meeting which was dealing with the issue of child welfare on reserves.

A human rights tribunal awarded Blackstock \$20,000 for being wrongfully banned from the meeting and for the "wilful and reckless conduct" of the bureaucrat who banned her.

Her crime?



Trying hold the federal government to account for the underfunding aboriginal children on reserves.

“Why did we have to bring the government of Canada to court to get them to treat First Nation children fairly? Little kids,” she asked.

“Why would it ever be OK to give a child less than other children?”

Why indeed.

It’s useful to step outside this situation and look in.

What would Canadians say if Amnesty International came out with a report saying that a country in Europe or Africa had a policy of discrimination against children based on race or ethnicity?

Nice Canadians would be mortified.

If we are the nice people we like to think we are, we will fix this and fix it now.

**Direct Link:** <http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1338376-lethbridge-a-nice-nation%E2%80%99s-nasty-blind-spot>

## Discovering reconciliation through dance

BY JEAN KO DIN, THE CATHOLIC REGISTER

January 31, 2016

Part of the road to reconciliation has to involve a change in culture and nothing moves culture forward more than art.

So while the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada has been collecting art to express the experiences at Indian residential schools, it has commissioned and supported artists across the country to commemorate this part of Canadian history.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, in partnership with the TRC, created *Going Home Star* — Truth and Reconciliation, an original contemporary ballet about the Indian residential school system.

The ballet premiered in Winnipeg last October. Following its local success, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet is taking the production across the country, starting Jan. 28 in Ottawa.

“From (the TRC’s) point of view, no matter what the ballet would be, their message would reach people that normally wouldn’t be reached,” said Mark Godden, choreographer and co-creator of *Going Home Star*. “It’s a subject matter that we have talked about in the past... and even though I’m not of aboriginal descent, it was something the company really wanted to do.”

Godden said while most of the cast and crew of the production are not of aboriginal descent, they were all eager to immerse themselves in the culture. In collaborating with the TRC, honorary witnesses and elders often visited the rehearsals and shared their

insights with the ballet company. One obstacle Godden encountered for himself was the idea of incorporating aboriginal history and tradition.

“I was kind of despairing of the fact that we might somehow be exploiting these people again for our own personal art form,” said Godden. “I wanted to be true to these stories, but I also wanted to be true to the ballet world.”

Eventually, Godden found the bridge in the music. He contacted Juno award-winning composer Christos Hatzis. Hatzis brought with him famed Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq, Steve Wood and the Northern Cree Singers. The music became the spirit of the aboriginal history and tradition, which freed Godden to be true to the classical movement of ballet. All that was left was the story.

In researching the story, Godden’s first impulse was to connect with the TRC as it collected first-hand accounts from residential school survivors. He watched hours and hours of live-stream footage from town hall meetings across the country.

“Once I witnessed so many of these stories, I realized that these (stories) were still raw. It’s still an open wound,” said Godden. “I was pretty devastated listening to it.”

Godden said he started out wanting to capture the real emotions from real witnesses. But in hearing testimony, he realized these stories were so personal and raw that it didn’t feel right exploiting their experiences for the ballet.

Instead, he decided to work with Canadian author and TRC honorary witness Joseph Boyden to create a fictional story that reflected the life of residential school survivors but through a contemporary perspective.

“Understanding how to write for a ballet was the hardest part,” said Boyden. “I didn’t have to do a lot of research on the First Nations. That’s what I’ve been doing for all of my writing life... I’ve never written for a ballet before and I wasn’t sure how to go about it. I was nervous, but also intrigued.”

While he was on a book tour for his last novel, *The Orenda*, Boyden was struck with the idea. The heart of the ballet would centre around the aboriginal teachings of the four directions and the traditional First Nations colours they represent.

The main character, Annie, is a young, urban First Nations woman. She represents South and red. She is a free-spirited, contemporary woman living in the city.

Annie passes Gordon every day in the subway. He is North and represents the colour white. He is a homeless guy, but tough. As the ballet progresses, Gordon introduces Annie to two others through a window that flashes back to the residential schools. Niska represents West and the colour black. She’s a young aboriginal woman who comes from a family of healers. Her family was forced to give her up and places her in a residential school. She is earthy and strong-willed and fights the priests and nuns at every turn.

Charlie is a child of the East and represents yellow. He is also imprisoned in a residential school of the past, but he believes if he follows the rules, he will eventually see his family again. Throughout, the characters must wrestle for their souls and their identities. It is a dramatic struggle that ends in hope for healing in the future.

Godden and Boyden agreed the story and emotion had to be rooted in the real-life experiences of school survivors, but the story is also meant to be uplifting.

“I didn’t want to approach this story from just one angle of the residential school in the past,” said Boyden. “I wanted to tell a story that captured the here and now... and

approaching it that way, I was able to try to paint a picture of a real possibility of reconciliation.”

Boyden adds a ballet needs a dramatic story to carry the music and the movement forward. He hopes this story will not only speak to the survivors or audience, but also to the young people who are inheriting the responsibility of the reconciliation.

“I don’t necessarily think that there’s a disconnect between young people and what has happened, but they certainly see the fallout from their parents and grandparents,” said Boyden. “I want the audience member to understand that this is not just something in the past, that reconciliation is going to be an ongoing issue for this country for a long time to come and that we’re all a part of this.”

Visit [rwb.org](http://rwb.org) for tour details.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.catholicregister.org/features/featureseries/item/21685-discovering-reconciliation-through-dance>

## **New Tawatinâ Bridge an important act of reconciliation**

Nina Legesse Image: Christina Varvis Feb 3, 2016

Two weeks ago, it was announced that the North Saskatchewan River’s newest bridge will be named Tawatinâ, the Cree word for “valley.” The bridge is in the works for the proposed 2020 Valley LRT line, which will finally connect Millwoods to the train system.

With this decision, city planner Cory Sousa hopes to convey the city’s respect for Indigenous culture. Edmonton is, in fact, the city with the second largest First Nations population in the country. In spite of this, there is very little acknowledgment given to the existing culture of Indigenous peoples, and so they remain the most invisible of visible minorities.

Yet, it looks as though we are experiencing a significant rise in the awareness of Aboriginal culture. Although racially prejudiced attitudes are omnipresent, one only has to glance at social media feeds, local events and news articles to realize there is a noticeable and progressive change in Aboriginal visibility.

It doesn’t take a lot of searching to notice a growing interest among Edmonton’s youth in Aboriginal issues and culture. The voices of Aboriginal youth, as a result, are more frequently rising from the shadows.

On Jan. 12, Edmonton Journal writer Elise Stolte interviewed two founding members of RISE (Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton), on the topic of First Nations reconciliation. Miranda Jimmy, from the Thunderchild First Nation in Saskatchewan, described reconciliation as “a process that’s been happening for a long time, since the signing of treaty.” But why should non-Aboriginal Edmontonians care about reconciliation?

To commemorate Edmonton’s long and progressive process of reconciliation, Jimmy and her co-founder, Kasey Machin, found powerful images that represented the city’s history: one depicted “Treaty 6 elders praying in the middle of Whyte Avenue when it was still a dirt road.”

Reconciliation is not only about social relations. Culture is inextricably attached to land and environment, and the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth of Edmonton are bringing this fact to light with activism. It is clear that Sousa's incorporation of Cree into Edmonton's landscape is impactful testimony of this contemporary movement of cultural awareness.

Further, as a rapidly increasing youth population loses the languages of older Cree speakers, the simple act of naming a bridge also signifies the will to preserve Indigenous languages.

Besides, perhaps it's time to liven up the aesthetics our city, in which the names of monuments and roads are seldom more interesting than "High Level Bridge," "Calgary Trail" and "West Edmonton Mall." And, while Tawatinâ is just a translation of the simple word "valley," at least it fits the theme of banality that seems to belong to Edmonton's legacy.

**Direct Link:** <https://thegatewayonline.ca/2016/02/new-tawatina-bridge-an-important-act-of-reconciliation/>

## **Indigenous affairs minister to look into rejected residential school cases**

**Bennett made comments in question period after coming under fire from NDP MP Charlie Angus**

The Canadian Press Posted: Feb 03, 2016 6:23 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2016 6:23 PM CT



Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett answers a question during Question Period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, on Wednesday, Feb.3, 2016. Bennett promised to look into the cases of about 1,000 residential school students disqualified for compensation after coming under fire from NDP MP Charlie Angus. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld)

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says her department will look into the cases of about 1,000 residential school students who have been disqualified for compensation by a technicality.

The minister made the commitment Wednesday in the House of Commons after the federal Liberal government came under fire during question period.

"We have learned that 1,000 victims of sexual and physical abuse from the residential schools had their cases thrown out on a flimsy legal technicality, which is that children who were abused in institutions run by the government are not, somehow, eligible for compensation by the government," NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus said in question period.

"This travesty was conjured up in the Department of Justice."

The issue centres on an administrative split created when the federal government took over the operation of some residential schools and left other institutions in the control of religious leaders.

It is estimated about 1,000 students who attended the federally operated institutions were found ineligible for compensation because of the split.

Bennett said she will have officials review the issue.

"I have asked my department to look into this, and we are going to look into it in a very serious manner right now," she told the Commons.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's commitment to restore the relationship with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples is a double-edged sword for residential school survivors, Angus said later in an interview.

"It does give the impression to Canadians that this dark chapter is over," he said.

"If those positive words are not matched by a change in the operating culture of government, then the survivors are continuing to be denied their basic right to restitution for the horrific crimes they endured."

The government does not need to study the administrative split, Angus added.

"They need to say for those people who were denied justice that they will get justice," he said.

"That's how you make things right. That's how we move on and that's how Canadians know that this chapter is closed."

It is the federal government who failed the children and the federal government needs to explain why they're continuing to fail, Angus noted.

Residential schools operated in Canada from the 1870s until 1996.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/carolyn-bennett-rejected-residential-school-1.3432823>

# Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

## New book takes an in depth-look at Greenlandic names

"Some of them can be over a thousand years old, which gives an amazing perspective"

JANE GEORGE, January 29, 2016 - 10:08 am



Curious about Greenlandic names, their meaning and history? You'll want to read Kalaallit Aqqi, a new publication from Oqaasileriffik, Greenland's language secretariat, by Nuka Møller. (PHOTO COURTESY OF N. MØLLER)



"I learned among many things that names were one of the oldest language forms still in existence," says Nuka Møller, of the Inuit Aqqinik Akuersisartut — the Personal Names Committee of the Oqaasileriffi, Greenland's language secretariat, and compiled the new book on Greenlandic names. (PHOTO COURTESY OF N. MØLLER)

In Greenland, if you are looking for a Greenlandic name for your child, you can now consult a new book that's rich in suggestions — and history.

Kalaallit Aqqi, a new publication from Oqaasileriffik, Greenland's language secretariat, looks at Greenlandic personal names, their meaning and their background.

Among these, a name — Quloqutsuk, which suggests a shared contact and history between early Inuit and First Nations people now living in British Columbia.

Names like Quloqutsuk offered a window back to the past for Oqaasileriffik linguist Nuka Møller, who compiled the book.

"I learned, among many things, that names were one of the oldest language forms still in existence, since some of them can be over a thousand years old, which gives an amazing perspective back in time," Møller told *Nunatsiaq News*.

Kalaallit Aqqi, published last December in Greenlandic, Danish and English, contains a newly-revised list of registered Greenlandic names.

And "registered" is a key word here. That's because Greenland law requires babies be named according to a set of guidelines from the Inuit Aqqinik Akuersisartut — the Personal Names Committee of the Oqaasileriffik, which, in 2009, received more than 300 inquiries about names.

"As the replies also increased, we felt obliged to share this material with the public," Møller said.

"In the beginning we selected and translated certain articles into Danish, English or Greenlandic and made them available through our home page, but with the growing interest, we decided to edit the material and publish a selection in an encyclopedic form."

This book's first section looks at the meaning of 403 selected Greenlandic names: 124 for girls, 155 for boys, 97 unisex names and 30 last names.

The 360-page book's second section looks at Greenlandic names, names of European origin adapted into Greenlandic, and Greenlandic last names approved by the Inuit Aqqinik Akuersisartut, up to and including June 2015.

Among the most interesting names cited by Møller includes that of Quloqutsuk, which Greenlandic scholar Robert Petersen first identified as dating back to the early Inuit of the Dorset culture, from 600 to 900 AD.

Quloqutsuk, a boy's name which originates from west Greenland, may possibly have come, across time and a vast distance, from the Kwakiutl language spoken by the First Nations group, the Kwakiutl, on northern Vancouver Island.



In Kwakiutl, Quequtsa means “sparrow.”

Quloqutsuk was a figure in the legend about Aqissiaq, thought to be a remnant from the Tuniit or Dorset people, because it's only known in Greenland and not among other Inuit, Møller said, adding that, as well, the legend is structurally similar to First Nations legends.

And there's another name with a long history and geographic spread: Kuuna, which was a Viking (Norse) word for woman — Kona.

“To my surprise, someone in Nunavut last year asked me if I knew anything about that name, since her uncle had used it for a name for his boat after an allegedly Inuktitut personal name,” Møller said.

Among the many other interesting bits of information contained in this book: many Greenlandic names originally were nicknames.

In the book, you'll find 46 nicknames and 30 so-called babbling names, names directed at babies or names derived from the mispronunciation by toddlers of kinship terms. These names often stuck throughout childhood and many are now on Greenland's official list of approved names.

These include names such as Aleqa (older sister to younger brother) and its “babbling form” — Aaqa.

Kinship terms remain “abundantly represented in the Greenlandic naming system,” the book notes.

These types of names, together with nicknames and babbling names, “survived the introduction of Christianity due to their neutral nature and lack of ‘heathen’ connotations and because of continued use in the private domain,” Møller says in the book's introduction.

“The Lutheran Church in Greenland encouraged use of Biblical names to emphasize a shift from heathen to the Christian faith. Most people, however, retained their traditional nicknames in everyday life.”

But the formal use of old Greenlandic names decreased throughout the years, and many names were forgotten.

During his research, Møller discovered that shamans and laymen had used a special language, a spirit language, when naming people.

These names would be used as wishes for the bearer to be a good hunter or names for protection and survival.

Some examples: Angussinnaaq — Adept at Catching Sea Mammals; Inuujuk and Inuusuttoq — The One Who Lives / The One Who Wishes to Live; Neqissannooq — They say This Meat is for You, in which “they” must be helping spirits; and Maleraq — The One Chased, which in spirit language suggests a seal.

Not surprisingly, such names were often looked at as highly personal information by Greenlandic Inuit in the past — and Møller notes that, “missionaries and expedition crew members also often related in their diaries surprise and irritation over meeting Greenlanders in the dark outside, and upon enquiring about who it was, they always replied “Uanga” (It’s me) without mentioning their name.

You can order “Greenlandic personal names — their meaning and background” [here](#).

**Kalaallit Aqqi**

**ISBN 978-87-990324-3-3**

**360 pages, format: hardcover binding with pictures • Price: 280 DKK (CAN \$55)**

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674new\\_book\\_takes\\_an\\_in\\_depth\\_look\\_at\\_greenlandic\\_names/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674new_book_takes_an_in_depth_look_at_greenlandic_names/)

## Red Horse: Native American drawings shed new light on Battle of Little Bighorn

The myth of Custer’s glorious last stand is debunked by a new exhibition of drawings by the Native American artist and warrior made five years later



Red Horse (Minneconjou Lakota Sioux, 1822-1907), Untitled from the Red Horse Pictographic Account of the Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1881. Photograph: National Anthropological Archive

**Jordan Riefe**, Friday 29 January 2016 18.52 GMTLast modified on Friday 29 January 201619.19 GMT

The concept of [manifest destiny](#) began to show cracks the day [Lt Col George A Custer](#) met his end at [Little Bighorn](#), outnumbered by Lakota Sioux and other warriors by an estimated 10 to one. Like all self-deluding notions, both he and it were bound to fail, and did so on an operatic scale. [Walt Whitman wrote of Custer's tawny flowing hair in battle](#), despite the fact he had shorn his famous locks days earlier in preparation for what he knew would be a bloody campaign.

“Now ending well in death the splendid fever of thy deeds, (I bring no dirge for it or thee, I bring a glad triumphal sonnet,) Desperate and glorious, aye in defeat most desperate, most glorious,” continues Whitman in his 1876 poem, [From Far Dakota's Canyons](#), written in faraway Brooklyn. The reality at Little Bighorn was somewhat different.

Custer planned to ride into the village and hold women and children hostage as a negotiating tactic. “Human shields might not be the best analogy,” explains Stanford professor [Scott Sagan](#). “They were human shields in the sense of potentially protecting the soldiers, but were also a magnet that would force the warriors to stay put and defend the village.”

Sagan, a professor of political science who is widely published on issues related to nuclear arms, was drawn to this particular area of study for several reasons, principal of which are a series of 12 drawings made by an eyewitness to the historic conflict. [Red Horse: Drawings of the Battle of the Little Bighorn](#), on display at the university's [Cantor Arts Center](#) through 9 May, offers a rare chance to see first-hand accounts from a Native American perspective.

Red Horse was a warrior of the Minneconjou Lakota Sioux and a respected artist. He made his drawings in 1881, five years after the battle, as part of his testimony about Little Bighorn. The 12 pictures are on loan from the Smithsonian, where 42 works by the Native American artist were last exhibited in 1976 to commemorate the centennial of Little Bighorn.



A page from Red Horse's ledger. Photograph: National Anthropological Archive/The Smithsonian

Images include Custer comrade General Marcus Reno's initial attacks on the village as well as Custer's forces in battle on a hillside. There is a graphic portrayal of Native American casualties in addition to a field of dead horses, and combatants from both sides leaving the battlefield.

"These candid pictures show the reality of warfare at the time, but also Red Horse's efforts to show the heroism of his friends, his fellow warriors," notes Sagan. "So he shows them fighting hand-to-hand combat against what he viewed as the invaders from the United States."

"What's particularly fascinating about these is they're so honest in the brutal depictions of warfare," says Stanford undergrad Sarah Sadlier, who has ancestors that were at Little Bighorn and a great-great-uncle who may have been Red Horse's translator. "In many ways Red Horse's work is the most trustworthy sort of visual depiction we have of the battle of Little Bighorn, a Little Bighorn that's not Custer-centric, one that nativizes from a participant who is a very respected person among the Lakota."

A popular genre of the time, ledger drawing was new to Native Americans who previously drew on animal hides. Sagan compares the drawings to the Bayeux Tapestry, a depiction of the Norman invasion and one of the oldest representative historical documents also considered a work of art. Red Horse's work is an ideal complement to The Face of the Battle, a popular sophomore seminar he teaches, in which students visit famous sites such as Little Bighorn and Gettysburg, assuming the roles of various historic participants based on research to help give them a combatant's perspective of the conflict.

Although the conflict marked a rare victory for the Lakota Sioux, it was only a reprieve before a stronger push to put plains Indians on reservations. Red Horse's drawings, along with an accompanying exhibit of student-curated Native American art on the subject, give voice to the victims of this barbarous treatment of indigenous peoples.

In his 2011 novel, Our Kind of Traitor, John Le Carre wrote: "The sacrifice of a brave man cannot be justified by the pursuit of an unjust war," words that ring truer than Whitman's eloquent, though misguided lionization of Custer in his poem.

"The portrayal of him has been one of gallantry, charging in a heroic last stand," says Sadlier, who hopes the exhibition might debunk a myth or two. "What people need to understand is the impact of his devastating tactics against women and children, completely against the rules of war. I think it's very important people be aware of that. This is one little crack in the facade that's been created around Lt Col Custer."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/jan/29/red-horse-stanford-university-native-american-drawings-battle-of-little-bighorn>

# Shirt With Old Native American Logo Rekindles Controversy

By [Catalina Trivino](#)

Students at Hall High School have started selling and wearing a t-shirt with the mascot's old logo of a Native American to classmates. Critics call it insensitive and racist.

The blue t-shirt shows "The Rez" is written above the logo, which is short for "The Reservation." The group is known as the school's student fan section during games.

"The Rez" has been under fire because of the negative connotation that comes with its name. The release of a new shirt has rekindled the conversation about the group's name; it sparked attention on Twitter.

Lakota hip-hop artist, Frank Waln, who spoke to students last school year about the offensive nature of their former mascot logo, tweeted: "I told them that as a native person from an actual Rez, I was offended and angered. None of these kids are native or from a Rez."

Later, the hip-hop posted: "Americans will fight harder to defend native mascots than they will to defend the lives of actual native ppl (sic) whose land they live on."

This tweet was shared over 1,000 times at the time of this post.

Some students say there needs to be a conversation about a name change of the group to bring inclusiveness.

"A lot of people disagree with the name, a lot of people find it very offensive and racist and have continually gone to them and said this is offensive and we want it changed. Some people aren't comfortable going to games and being with them rooting for the school because of it," said student council treasurer, Talia Feldman.

Last year, the high school changed its Warriors Native American mascot logo to a warrior wearing what appears to be a helmet and the letters "HW" for "Hall Warriors".

Some students say the t-shirt shouldn't be worn.

"They do wear these shirts to school as a way to exercise their right to free speech, that is their argument around that. We're trying to get around that," said student, Rachel Corcoran-Adams.

School Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Andrew Morrow told NBC Connecticut in a statement:

*The West Hartford Public Schools requires that all school-sanctioned and school-funded clubs and organizations respect diverse cultural values and the importance of inclusion. Unfortunately, a small number of students have chosen to selfishly seek attention by deliberately continuing to promote an unofficial student group with a name and imagery that is inappropriate and racially insensitive. This attention-seeking behavior is deliberately designed to provoke the larger student body and the community.*

*These students do not represent our schools and the overwhelming majority of our caring and compassionate students. Instead of these actions, we would prefer to be highlighting and congratulating the two Hall High School seniors who were identified this week as National Presidential Scholar Candidates. This prestigious award is a testament to their hard work and dedication and we are proud to have them represent both Hall High School and West Hartford.*

Students told NBC Connecticut on Thursday said they hope bringing awareness to the situation will help start of a conversation between students and administration.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/Shirt-With-Old-Native-American-Logo-Rekindles-Controversy-366925171.html>

## **The First Person of Native American Descent Was Elected to the U.S. Senate 109 Years Ago Today**

Charles Curtis, who would go on to become Herbert Hoover's vice president, left behind a problematic legacy



By [Danny Lewis](#)

SMITHSONIAN.COM  
JANUARY 29, 2016

A little more than a century before Barack Obama became the first biracial president of the United States, Charles Curtis served as one of the first biracial politicians in the U.S. Senate. Curtis may not be one of America's most oft-remembered politicians, but he was the first politician with mixed Native American and European heritage to serve as a senator and his role in the national conversation about race is a complicated one.

Curtis was born on January 25, 1860 in Topeka, Kansas to a white father and a mother of Kaw, Osage, Potawatomi and French descent. He was raised on a Kaw reservation near Council Grove after his father went off to fight in the Civil War and his mother died. There, he experienced first-hand the problems that plagued many Native American communities at the time: such as rampant outbreaks of smallpox and alcoholism, [according to the Kansas Historical Society](#).

As a teenager, Curtis moved back to Topeka, where he owned and operated a horse-drawn taxi service. As a cab driver in the state's capital, Curtis often gave rides to the city's lawyers, which gave him his first taste of politics and the law according to Nova Cottrell, who operates (and lives in) the Charles Curtis House Museum in Topeka.

"The lawyers took a liking to him and would always call on him to take them to their places of business, and he would get bored waiting on them and started reading the law books," [Cottrell told Nate Dimeo for NPR](#) in 2008. "And by the age of 21, [he] passed a bar exam without a formal education."

Just a few years later, Curtis was elected county prosecutor and in 1892 he was elected congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives. While Curtis' heritage made him stick out among Congress' overwhelmingly white majority, he turned his colleagues' stereotypical perceptions of him to his political advantage, historian William Unrau told Dimeo. On one hand, they saw him as canny and resourceful due to his white heritage; on the other, they saw his Native American ancestry as putting him in touch with nature.

"In fact, he used his Indian-ness when it was convenient for him in terms of what he was trying to achieve politically," Unrau said.

Because of his descent, Curtis was given a lot of power over Native Americans' affairs. However, he believed that the future of Native Americans rested in assimilation into white American culture, not in preserving their own identity. He is perhaps [most famous \(or infamous\)](#) for the "Act for the Protection of the People of Indian Territory," better known as the "Curtis Act of 1898," which gave the Dawes Commission the authority to determine who received tribal membership. During his career in Congress, Curtis authored bills that stripped Native Americans of mining rights and even dissolved whole tribes, Dimeo reported. He was, however, a supporter of women's rights: later, as a



senator, Curtis helped speed up the vote for the 19th Amendment and sponsored legislation protecting married women's assets, [according to the Senate Historical Office](#).

After decades of service in Congress and in the Senate, Curtis ran for president in 1928. After he lost the primary election to Herbert Hoover, he was offered the role of vice president in the general campaign. Unfortunately for Curtis, Hoover gave him few responsibilities outside of representing the White House at social events and opening the 1932 Olympics. When Hoover was defeated by Franklin Roosevelt in 1932, Curtis retired from national politics and returned to practicing law, according to the Senate Historical Office.

Curtis may have had a landmark career, but he left behind problematic policies, whose legacies continue to impact indigenous people today.

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/The-First-Person-of-Native-American-Descent-Was-Elected-to-the-US-Senate-109-Years-Ago-Today-180957893/#rmAfyVpT9pOcvaVk.99>

## Colonial America Depended on the Enslavement of Indigenous People

The role of enslaving Native Americans in early American history is often overlooked



An engraving showing the Pequot War (AS400 DB/Corbis)

By [Marissa Fessenden](#)

SMITHSONIAN.COM

JANUARY 29, 2016

Textbooks and classroom lesson plans are starting to present a more clear-eyed view of America's history—such as slowly recognizing the [violence that happened when](#)

[European settlers encountered the indigenous people](#) of the so-called "[New World](#)." But there are still many [overlooked stories](#). One of these startling omissions to the history books is something Margaret Ellen Newell is calling attention to in her book, [Brethren by Nature](#): Colonists living in New England relied on the labor of thousands of Native Americans to build their new lives.

The enslavement of New England's indigenous people was glossed over in the work of historians after World War I, Newell says, [as Tanya H. Lee reports for Indian Country Today](#). Newell, an [associate professor of history at Ohio State University](#), writes that historians "reconstructed the compelling narrative of the Puritan migration.... Many of these works stressed the uniqueness of New England culture and sought there the origins of American exceptionalism."

During the course of researching her first book, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England*, Newell came across a list of Native American slaves kept by colonists in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. She was surprised by the find because she had been taught that New England colonists didn't keep Native Americans as slaves, because they often ran away. But that impression was incorrect.

Lee writes:

*The colonial economy depended on slavery, many well-to-do households functioned only because of slavery, early colonial legal codes were devised to justify slavery and the Pequot War and King Philip's War were fought in large measure to perpetuate slavery.*

Indeed, in the 1630s, the Connecticut River Valley was home to the powerful Pequots. The settlers at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay wanted their rich, fertile land and in order to get it, they persuaded Mohegan and Narragansett allies to help them fight the Pequots. In 1637, they burned a village on the banks of the Mystic River in southeastern Connecticut, killing 400 to 700 Pequots, [according to the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut](#). That massacre turned the tide of the war and Pequot survivors were pursued, captured and sold as slaves.

King Philip's War in the mid 1670s—which was fought to [protest the English colonists encroaching influence](#) and forced labor of Native Americans—ended with "as many as 40

percent of the Indians in southern New England living in English households as indentured servants or slaves," Lee writes.

The English colonists weren't the only ones to use the labor of enslaved indigenous people, of course. "The Spanish were almost totally dependent on Indian labor in most of their colonies," [writes Alan Gallay for \*History Now\*](#). Enslaving Native Americans became one of the primary ways to expand the economy for colonists in South Carolina and to a lesser extent in North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana. "From 1670 to 1720 more Indians were shipped out of Charleston, South Carolina, than Africans were imported as slaves—and Charleston was a major port for bringing in Africans," Gallay writes.

As the [African slave trade](#) took off in the late 1700s, the Native American slave trade waned. Many remaining tribes had been pushed West, but something else was taking place, that pushed the data down, as well. Some Native Americans were intermarrying with African American. The children were then [referred to as "colored,"](#) effectively erasing their Native American heritage. The enslavement of Native Americans thus became obscured, but [modern DNA technology helped keep that story from being lost to time](#).

The history of the enslavement of Native Americans continues to be a complicated and dark part of America's history, but it is one that deserves to continue to be researched and reconciled with.

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/colonial-america-depended-enslavement-indigenous-people-180957900/#qHOjxr5wcgZta1qz.99>

## Cal State honors professor starting three-year American Indian project

**Adolfo Guzman-Lopez**

January 28 2016

CSU San Marcos Professor Kristen Diekman was one of the recipients of the university system's annual Wang Family Excellence Awards. ADOLFO GUZMAN-LOPEZ/KPCC



#### AUDIO FROM THIS STORY

A California State University San Marcos professor launching a project aimed at empowering Native American students through digital media received top honors from the university system this week for her work getting student voices heard.

CSU trustees [honored professor Kristine Diekman](#) this week with one of five Outstanding Faculty Awards.

Trustees noted Diekman's [30 years of work producing films and videos](#) that push for social change.

"A lot of people do not have access to be able to have their stories and their voices heard," Diekman said.

She seeks to empower people by using digital media as tools for social change. One of the most satisfying projects, she said, was "A Way Out," which helped a young man leave a violent gang.

Her newest effort, the American Indian Digital Media and Culture Project, is a three-year collaborative project with Joely Proudfit, her university's [Director of Native American Academic Strategic Planning](#). The project's goal is to build a bridge between students on campus - Native American and non-Native American - and the tribes near the north San Diego County campus through video and digital projects.

Games, apps, videos, photos will be the tools to explore American Indian culture. She hopes to enlist tribal members to talk to students on campus about how to approach American Indians when asking them to document their lives and research their culture.

Diekman said the project will help her university's Native American students better connect with their heritage.

"But also I think it will help the general student population to become more sensitive to the needs of the American Indian students on campus," she said.

One possible project could be an app to teach American Indian languages.

Some activists hope similar projects sprout at other campuses.

“We haven’t really made it a point as a community to involve [American Indian students], and to reassure them and to help guide them,” said Patricia Lopez, a member of the L.A. City/County Native American Indian Commission.

According to the 2010 Census, more Native Americans live in California than in any other state. But they’re still far less represented in colleges and universities than they are in the rest of the state: Native American students are less than one half of one percent of students in the entire Cal State system.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/01/28/57112/cal-state-honors-professor-starting-three-year-ame/>

## Controversial Ecuador oil deal lets China stake an \$80-million claim to pristine Amazon rainforest

**Jonathan Kaiman Contact Reporter**

They tried talks. They tried letters. They tried protests. But nothing could stop the deal.

Ecuador’s government sold oil exploration rights in a remote corner of the Amazon rainforest to a consortium of Chinese state-owned oil companies this week, despite dogged resistance from indigenous groups in the South American country who fear they could lose everything.

Andes Petroleum Ecuador, a consortium of two Chinese state-owned firms — China National Petroleum Corp. and China Petroleum and Chemical Corp. — on Wednesday purchased the rights to explore two oil blocks in the Amazon that cover an area of 500,000 acres, 1.5 times the size of the city of Los Angeles. The deal was worth about \$80 million, according to the research firm Energy Intelligence.

Experts and activists fear that the deal could destroy a pristine rainforest ecosystem and threaten unique, endangered cultures, including two isolated indigenous tribes.

“That’s essentially the only Amazon in Ecuador that hasn’t been devastated by oil operations,” said Adam Zuckerman, environmental and human rights campaigner at the Oakland-based nonprofit Amazon Watch.

“The whole northern Amazon has the legacy of Texaco, now owned by Chevron. Andes Petroleum, which is operating in the south, already operated in the north — and because of a legacy of contamination, and quite honestly, ethnocide in the north, the southern population sees this and says, ‘We don’t want this.’”

The oil blocks overlap with the traditional home of the Sápara, an indigenous group with only 300 members, according to Amazon Watch. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] declared the group an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2001 for their small numbers and unique, but disappearing language.



Ecuador president's bid for fourth term faces growing opposition

The blocks also border Yasuní National Park, a 3,800-square-mile area of jungle which is home to two indigenous tribes, the nomadic Tagaeri and the Taromenane, who have no contact with the outside world. Amazon Watch said the project may exacerbate “their vulnerability as oil drilling and infrastructure expands north, east, south and west of them.”

China’s ambassador to Ecuador, Wang Yulin, joined members from the consortium at a signing ceremony Wednesday, according to a statement by the Chinese Embassy in Ecuador.

Outside, a small group of indigenous people gathered in protest. Wearing traditional headdresses, they held signs reading: “Chinese firms, get off of my land!” and “Don’t sacrifice the Amazon to petroleum companies!”

“The government is directly responsible for whatever that happens to our villages,” said Jorge Herrera, president of the Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, in a video posted after the signing. “The project is illegitimate and illegal. It is against our villages and against nature.

“This is a government of double standards and double morality,” he said. “Consequently, we must respect the constitution. The agreement on Jan. 25 with the Chinese [consortium] Andes Petroleum is unconstitutional and illegitimate.”

The Ecuadorian constitution requires that the government undergo “free, prior, and informed consultation” with local groups before pushing through sensitive environmental projects. Yet indigenous groups say that the national government has divided and manipulated local communities to fulfill the consultation conditions, and has violently cracked down on opposition to potentially lucrative deals.

China’s state-run New China News Agency reported the deal Wednesday. Zhao Xinjun, the president of Andes Petroleum Ecuador, said that the consortium has invested \$3.5 billion in Ecuador, “with cutting-edge technologies and full respect for the country's environmental regulations,” according to the report.

Ecuador produces 540,000 barrels a day of crude oil, its top export. As oil prices continue to fall, the country is seeking loans from Beijing to keep its economy afloat. This month, Ecuador announced that it had signed \$7.5 billion in new financing agreements with Beijing, despite already owing China billions of dollars.

The deal “sends a message that our country is building up confidence and that companies want to come and invest here despite the low international oil prices,” Ecuadorian Minister of Hydrocarbons Carlos Pareja said, according to the state news agency.

Amazon Watch said in a statement that “Ecuador’s southern Ecuadorian Amazon has a long history of indigenous resistance, project failures, and companies that have abandoned drilling plans. A laundry list of companies, including Arco, Burlington Resources, ConocoPhillips, and CGC all had projects paralyzed, were forced to declare *force majeure*, and ultimately withdrew from the country due to community opposition.”

*Chuan Xu in the Times’ Beijing bureau contributed to this report.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-ecuador-china-oil-20160129-story.html>



# Indigenous People Say Oregon's 'Domestic Terrorists' Are Just Fighting Over Native Land

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By *Rachel Browne and Hilary Beaumont*

January 29, 2016 | 10:50 am

A month-long land dispute between anti-government militia and federal officers in Oregon is evoking memories of another standoff that ended 25 years ago north of the US border.

VICE News spoke to two people who were at the forefront of the Oka standoff, widely considered the most famous land dispute in Canadian history. The Indigenous people in the heart of the conflict say if the group in Oregon were people of color, there would be no hesitation to label them — like the Canadian government labeled Indigenous people at Oka — "domestic terrorists."

For Serge Simon, Grand Chief of Montreal-area reserve Kanesatake, the standoff in Oregon reminds him of the struggles his community has endured to defend their rights. But he emphasizes that it's like comparing apples with oranges.

"What's going on in Oregon is not a fight for ancestral or treaty rights, it's simply a group of people who don't agree with their government," says Simon.

Simon was at Oka in 1990 when one Quebec provincial police officer was shot to death, an Indigenous elder died after he was struck in the chest by a boulder thrown by a Canadian protester, and a Mohawk teenager was nearly killed after she was stabbed by a soldier. The standoff saw Indigenous people fortify their territory, blocking police. Eventually, the Canadian army halted the construction of a golf course and luxury condos on the indigenous peoples' ancestral land, which included a sacred burial site.

"Looking at the situation, it's kind of like 'well how do you like it' type of thing," he says, noting there's some irony in white men being upset over stolen land. "Because it's been done to us, now they know how we feel when you see these lands that your nation could have used for one thing or another, and seen the occupation of what used to be their territory."

An American Indian tribe, the Burns Paiute tribe, who are caretakers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that the militia group occupied, have said the group is not welcome. "The protesters have no right to this land. It belongs to the native people who live here," tribal leader Charlotte Rodrique told reporters at a press conference outside the cultural centre near the refuge in early January.

Bundy's occupation has left one of his own dead, and has put a half-dozen others in jail. He and his fellow militants have had no qualms about threatening force, publicly vowing that they were "willing to kill and be killed" over the sentencing of two fellow ranchers, who were found to be the source of a fire that destroyed swaths of a wildlife preserve.

The occupation has largely dissipated following the arrests, but a core group of militia members have vowed to stay.

Simon can understand how the situation escalated. He says the one comparison he can draw between Oregon and Oka is "the potential for violence. You can compare it to that."

"It starts with a little roadblock and an occupation, and then it leads to more confrontation. It leads to little clashes, war of words, until finally silence, and then the confrontation begins: The violence," he says.

At Oka, police corporal Marcel Lemay was shot dead by a bullet of unknown origin. The day the standoff ended, a Canadian soldier stabbed 14-year-old Waneek Horn-Miller close to the heart with his bayonet.

Horn-Miller, who, at 14-years-old, cooked food for the Mohawk warriors for three weeks during the crisis, said the two standoffs had "polar opposite" goals. While both were standoffs over land, Oka was about protecting ancestral territory while Oregon was an attempt to illegally take land, she explained.

The Oka crisis, which profoundly changed the relationship between Indigenous people and the Canadian government, led other First Nations to draw similar lines in the sand. The 1995 Gustafsen Lake Standoff in British Columbia also saw the federal government call in the army when Indigenous land owners stood their ground over unceded territory.

Horn-Miller, who went on to become an Olympic athlete, remembers then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney called the Indigenous people at Oka "terrorists" and ordered in the military. In the Oregon standoff, she remarked, there's been a reluctance to call the group "domestic terrorists," even though they were heavily armed. The military was not called in, and local police say they tried to cool tensions.

"When we were called terrorists, it was such a shock," she says. "We weren't terrorizing anyone — we were being terrorized."

When it comes to the Oregon standoff, which she says has been perceived as "cowboys" in the "Wild West," Horn-Miller isn't impressed. "If it was native people it would be: 'You're breaking the law and the law applies to everybody, and we've got to crack down.'"

"It's interesting that they let [the Oregon conflict] go on as long as it did, because had those been anyone of color or Indigenous people, there would have been troops in there a lot earlier," she says, calling it a stark difference based on skin color.

"Indigenous people learned a long time ago that when you do have a protest, or if you're trying to stop something happening, you don't go armed, you go peacefully," she continued. "Because we have been attacked, and have learned the hard way that the government will attack you before asking questions, and ask questions after."

Simon also has a hard time feeling sorry for Bundy and his crew.

"It's difficult for me to have any sympathy for either side when I know that the land they are fighting each other over is land that they stole off of native people," he says.

He says he feels solidarity for the native people who had original claim to the territory that Bundy is fighting for.

When it comes to Oka, even though the standoff is over, Simon says his community is still reeling from the aftermath of conflict.

To that end, he does have advice for Bundy.

"There's always the solution when you talk," Simon says. "And they're not talking properly to each other."

He laughs. "Maybe what we should do is offer the Iroquois [nation] service of diplomacy. Send them up to Oregon to see if they can't mediate the dispute."

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/indigenous-people-say-bundys-domestic-terrorists-are-just-fighting-over-native-land>

# Bill would scrap Columbus Day for 'Indigenous People's Day' in Utah

POSTED 3:48 PM, JANUARY 28, 2016, BY [BEN WINSLOW](#)



SALT LAKE CITY — A bill being drafted in the Utah State Legislature would rename Columbus Day to “Indigenous People’s Day” in the state.

Sen. Jim Dabakis, D-Salt Lake City, told FOX 13 he was crafting the legislation to honor the people who were in Utah before the pioneers, instead of Christopher Columbus.

“It’s kind of an old, haggaring idea that Christopher Columbus did something,” Dabakis said. “He was the first white guy to arrive, he didn’t know where he was going, he ended up in a place he thought he wasn’t. He really has contributed nothing to civilization.”

Dabakis said he has support from members of Utah’s Native American tribes. The bill is expected to be filed in the legislature by next week.

**Direct Link:** <http://fox13now.com/2016/01/28/bill-would-scrap-columbus-day-for-indigenous-peoples-day-in-utah/>

## ***Yvonne Chouteau, Native American Ballerina, Dies at 86***

By JACK ANDERSON JAN. 29, 2016



Yvonne Chouteau, one of the five celebrated Oklahoma ballerinas with an American Indian background, in a 1963 photo.

Yvonne Chouteau, a former principal dancer of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo who emerged as one of a celebrated group of dancers known as the American Indian ballerinas of Oklahoma, died on Sunday at her home in Oklahoma City. She was 86.

The cause was congestive heart failure, said Mary Margaret Holt, director of the School of Dance and dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Oklahoma. Ms. Chouteau was a founder of the dance school, one of the leading institutions of its kind in the Southwest.

A dancer of great radiance and lyricism, Ms. Chouteau was one of five prominent Native American dancers who were raised in Oklahoma. The others were Rosella Hightower, Moscelyne Larkin, Maria Tallchief and her sister Marjorie Tallchief, now the last survivor.

The women were sometimes called the state's "Five Moons," which became the title of a set of bronze sculptures by Monte England and Gary Henson that were installed on the lawn of the Tulsa Historical Society. They are also depicted in a mural by Mike Larsen that hangs in the rotunda of the Oklahoma State Capitol.

Part French and part Shawnee-Cherokee, Myra Yvonne Chouteau was born into a pioneering Southwestern family in Fort Worth on March 7, 1929, the only child of Corbett Edward Chouteau and the former Lucy Annette Taylor. The family soon moved to Vinita, Okla., and her father, who was known as C. E. Chouteau, became a prominent American Indian figure in the state.

Ms. Chouteau was a direct descendant of Maj. Jean Pierre Chouteau (1758-1849), who established Oklahoma's oldest white settlement in 1796.

A child prodigy as a dancer — she liked to joke that if one reversed the syllables in her surname, "Chou-teau" became "Toe-shoe" — Ms. Chouteau started dancing when she was 2 1/2 years old. She received early training in Oklahoma and then in New York City, where she attended the School of American Ballet.

She was accepted into the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at 14, becoming the company's youngest dancer at the time. She performed her first solo role when she danced the Prayer variation in "Coppélia" in 1945, an interpretation that the critic Edwin Denby, in his book "Looking at the Dance," called "lovely in every way."

Major roles soon followed in "Raymonda," "Paquita," "The Nutcracker" and "Pas de Quatre." Describing Ms. Chouteau in performance, the British critic P. W. Manchester wrote, "Although she is tall and strongly built, she is very light and brings an ecstatic quality to her dancing."



Yvonne Chouteau in 2008.

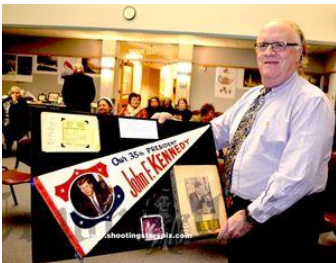
Ms. Chouteau married her fellow Ballet Russe dancer [Miguel Terekhov](#) in 1956 and left the company the next year, when she was expecting a baby. Always proud of being an Oklahoman — in 1947 she became the first person under 50 to be inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame — she returned to the state and settled there with her husband.

Mr. Terekhov joined her in 1963 in founding the School of Dance at the University of Oklahoma as well as the Oklahoma City Civic Ballet, precursor of today's Oklahoma City Ballet. He died in 2012.

Ms. Chouteau is survived by two daughters, Elizabeth A. Impallomeni and Christina Conway, and two grandsons.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/arts/dance/yvonne-chouteau-native-american-ballerina-dies-at-86.html>

## Tewksbury's history and culture of Native Americans



Dave Marcus gave a presentation about Tewksbury's history and the Native American Tribes who once lived here on Thursday evening at the Tewksbury Public Library. Photo by Maureen Brady

Posted: Saturday, January 30, 2016 6:30 am

By **BRENDAN FOLEY** [BrendanMFoley@Outlook.com](mailto:BrendanMFoley@Outlook.com)

TEWKSBURY- As the town prepares to hear debates both for and against the Tewksbury Redmen Mascot, one of the key elements of both arguments is the historical treatment of Native Americans in the United States and the Merrimack Valley. Last Thursday, David E. Marcus, President of the Tewksbury Historical Society, held a lecture at the Tewksbury Public Library to shed some light on that history.

Discussing the history of the “Redmen” Mascot specifically, the earliest Marcus and his assistants could trace the use of such a mascot in association with Tewksbury schools and athletics was the high school hockey team in 1969. Marcus and his team scoured yearbooks going back decades to track down that information.

“Early teams used the letter T,” Marcus said. “The first notice of the word ‘Redmen’ or the symbol on a jersey was the 1969 hockey team. The symbol was then on a couple of yearbooks, and then mostly only for the male teams. The female teams, treated as second class citizens until a certain time, continued to use the T as their symbol.”

The library meeting room was packed end-to-end with locals interested in the history described by Marcus. Marcus presented a deep dive into the history and lore surrounding the Native Americans of the Merrimack Valley.

Among the details provided by Marcus, and confirmed by Glenn Pierce, author of “Naming Rites: A Biographical History of North American Team Names”, was the fact that the traditional “war bonnet” headdress popularized in association with Native American Mascots, including the Tewksbury Redmen, were never worn by Native Americans in this part of the country.

The “war bonnet” was a kind of tribal headdress used almost exclusively by Native Americans west of the Mississippi river.

In an article dated April 16, 2015 in Indian Country Today, tribal rights attorney Tara Houska wrote about the continued use of such iconography in contemporary mascots.

“The history of playing Indian in the United States is a long one, harkening back to the days when government-sponsored genocide of Native peoples was the norm,” Houska wrote. “Sentimental racism is difficult for many to let go of; love of team, love of romanticized Native American cultures is far easier to accept than the harsh realities of the historic and ongoing treatment of a people that continue to exist.”

Marcus’s lecture laid down the timeline of Native-Colonial relationships, stretching back centuries and touched upon many pivotal moments, including the “Great Sickness” of 1633 that killed 90 percent of the local native population.

“The condition of this people was so lamentable and they fell down so generally of this disease as they were in the end not able to help one another, no not to make a fire nor to fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead,” wrote William Bradford, an English settler at the time. “But would strive as long as they could, and when they could procure no other means to make fire, they would burn the wooden trays and dishes they ate their meat in, and their very bows and arrows. And some would crawl out on all fours to get a little water, and sometimes die by the way and not be able to get in again.”

Marcus’s lecture also spent a good deal of time discussing the nature of the “Praying Indian” towns of the area. Fourteen such towns were created to teach the English language and English religion to what Native Americans still remained after plague and war decimated the population. The “Wamesit Indians” were one such designation, located near modern Tewksbury.



“The thing that set them all apart is they went through this great sickness where they lost ninety percent of people,” Marcus said. “They welcomed help from Europeans because they could help protect them from the other tribes in the area.”

Issues surrounding the legacy of Native Americans in the United States continues to this day, and continues to have an impact on modern lives. While Marcus kept the focus of the discussion away from modern controversy and instead entirely on centuries long past, those events still ripple down the years and effect each of us today.

**Direct Link:** [http://homenewshere.com/tewksbury\\_town\\_crier/news/article\\_8cfcfb6e-c54b-11e5-8ace-7b4be4430245.html](http://homenewshere.com/tewksbury_town_crier/news/article_8cfcfb6e-c54b-11e5-8ace-7b4be4430245.html)

## One of a Kind Program Helps Native American Students in School

POSTED JANUARY 29, 2016 BY JACOB OWENS



A one of a kind program at Central Michigan University is helping Native American students graduate high school and go on to college.

According to David Kinney, professor of sociology at CMU and the founder of the program, Native American students have the lowest high school graduation and college graduation rates of any ethnic or racial group in the nation.

A partnership with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, the program pairs Native American students at CMU with fifth through eighth grade Saginaw Chippewa Indian students. Since 2013 the program has grown from ten students at one school to fifty-five at five different schools across central Michigan.

The program not only helps the younger students, but the college students as well. According to Kinney's data those students saying they plan to go college increased by 10% in the program and of the college students, 46% increased their GPA.

And one of the program's mentors is putting what he learned to use in Emmet and Cheboygan counties. Davis Timmer, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, now works with the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and

using the framework he learned in the CMU program he now tries to reduce marijuana use and underage drinking in Native American youth.

In the coming years Kinney would like to see the program grow to include other schools and tribes in Michigan and beyond.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.minews26.com/content/?p=42103>

## **Some Amherst Students Resist Decision to Remove Murderer of Native Americans as Mascot**

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By Natasha Noman January 29, 2016

On Tuesday, the Massachusetts-based Amherst College board of trustees decided to eliminate the use of their college's unofficial mascot, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, a notorious murderer of Native Americans. And though the college's decision to formally disassociate itself from its long-time mascot is supported by a majority of students, a vocal minority is making its dissent known.

Lord Jeff — as he's affectionately referred to and after whom the college and its town are named — was an infamous colonial man of the military. He made a name for himself by distributing smallpox-infected blankets to Native Americans in a (successful) effort to help eliminate the indigenous population.

"You will do well to try to inoculate the Indians by means of blankets, as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race," he wrote in a letter to Colonel Henry Bouquet in 1763.

For some reason, the majority of the Amherst student body didn't find Lord Jeff's imperial, genocidal tendencies terribly palatable. A student-helmed movement to oust Lord Jeff as their mascot began with a library sit-in on Nov. 13.

In the wake of the demonstration, a poll was taken of current students and alumni respectively, revealing that the majority of both groups disapproved of the unofficial mascot. The results were published on the college website and a community Facebook page, entitled "The Moose: A New Mascot for Amherst College."

Change soon followed.

"Amherst College finds itself in a position where a mascot — which, when you think about it, has only one real job, which is to unify — is driving people apart because of what it symbolizes to many in our community," Cullen Murphy, the chair of the board of trustees, wrote in a statement on behalf the board on Tuesday.

"If [students] find the mascot offensive regardless of anyone's intentions — and they truly do, and have spoken about this in very personal terms — then that is a significant reality and it needs to be taken seriously," Murphy adds. "This is not about political correctness; it is about present community."

The university will cease to use their blanket-loving friend in all official communications and messaging and it will rename the on-campus Lord Jeffrey Inn.

However, the move was not without resistance. One anonymous person responded to an op-ed in the student newspaper, the *Amherst Student*, on the subject with the following comment:

"The one student I know who left a comment on the student newspaper not in favor of the change received a lot of flack," Khalil Flemming, a senior at Amherst involved with student activism, told *Mic*. "He was kind of ostracized."

"But, interestingly, a lot of students on campus still do vehemently support Lord Jeff, for the sake of tradition, they say," Flemming added. "For me, it's hard to understand."

"It's a symbolic victory because it shows students can actually enact change. Just the fact that you're reaching out to current students to ask, 'What do you think about this?' is a really good sign."

Mercedes MacAlpine, another student at Amherst and active member of the group Amherst Uprising, told *Mic* the change in discourse and consciousness is perhaps one of the most important things to emerge from the controversy.

"It's hard to explain how valuable that shift in discussion is and the feeling on the ground, where people are truly showing that level of compassion," MacAlpine said. "It's such a strong, positive sign; I think we're on a good track."

MacAlpine also believes the campus fight for abandoning the unofficial mascot served as a microcosm for the country, struggling with its own sense of identity. Whitesboro, a village in upstate New York, for example, voted on Jan. 11 in favor of keeping their seal, depicting a white man choking — or "wrestling" — a Native American.

"It's a matter of asking ourselves as a country the same questions we ask ourselves on the community level," MacAlpine opined. "'Who do we want to be?'"

**Direct Link:** <http://mic.com/articles/133877/some-amherst-students-resist-decision-to-remove-murderer-of-native-americans-as-mascot#.8O9tZn6b7>

# Red-Carpet Bombing: Native Youth Reporters Gain Respect From Spike Lee and others at Sundance

Vincent Schilling

1/29/16

In 2012, some actors and directors strolled past the Native Youth reporters of On Native Ground, assuming they were ill-prepared and not worth the time. But after these young reporters stepped up, played hardball and asked real questions, attendees at the Sundance Film Festival were forced to listen.

According to Jack Kohler, executive producer and founder of On Native Ground, though the youth were at first disregarded, they quickly gained respect.



*Alex, Danny & Koli of ONG (Courtesy Photo)*

“Typically, some of the film directors and producers would walk past our media position, thinking the youth reporter was not prepared and not worth their time to stop and chat. However, in 2012 there was a major blizzard, and the same old questions were being asked on the red carpet, such as ‘who are you wearing?’ or ‘how do you like the snow?’ “In this instance, our youth was covering a Spike Lee film and shouted a question to the director which made him stop in his tracks. Once they started the interview, it was obvious our youth reporter was very well prepared, and the media outlets to our left and right, including Reuters, CNN, ET and Vanity Fair, all stopped their chatter and listened to our interview.”

Independent of the standard outlets that provide media coverage, On Native Ground (ONG) is the very first Native American credentialed media outlet, made up of Native youth ages 15-22, who have covered the world’s largest independent film festival, the Sundance Film Festival since 2009.

As credentialed media, ONG stands front and center at the red carpet premieres and alongside the bigger names in media, hold interviews with the directors, producers, filmmakers, actors, musical composers and cinematographers.

According to Kohler, the ONG media crew in 2016 is another powerhouse of young talent and consists of publicist Koli Kohler, a recent graduate of University of Hawaii, and an award-winning musician and composer.

Cameraperson Alex Greenlee is a senior in high school and is a recent alumnus of On Native Ground's summer mentoring program as part of the California State Fair Youth and Media Production Team. Greenlee is already an award winning filmmaker, director and screenwriter.

Danny Deleon is the studio anchor for On Native Ground's award winning original television series, On Native Ground Youth Reports, which airs on the FNX channel.

Deleon is an accomplished actor, musician and athlete and is conducting the red carpet interviews at Sundance Film Festival 2016.

"There was no question in our mind that our youth reporters and our media team had earned our place on the red carpet media galley and everyone took note," says Kohler.

*Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/29/red-carpet-bombing-native-youth-reporters-gain-respect-spike-lee-and-others-sundance>*

## A Native American Basketball Tournament Bounces Back

BY [JESSE WILL](#), JANUARY 31, 2016



Participants in the the thirty-ninth Lakota Nation Invitational, at Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The Oglala Lakota—also known as the Oglala Sioux—consider South Dakota's Black Hills to be their spiritual homeland, and on a Tuesday in mid-December, a record snowfall had turned their pine-covered peaks white. In the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, in nearby Rapid City, a former tribal president named Bryan Brewer stood on a hardwood court and told a few hundred teen-agers the origin story of the basketball tournament they would play in over the next four days, the thirty-ninth Lakota Nation Invitational. Brewer wore a turquoise vest, a yellow beaded bolo tie, and black Nikes. The kids sat in their warmup suits and ate Pizza Hut in the bleachers.

"After Wounded Knee, no one wanted to play us," Brewer said. He was referring to the occupation of the town of Wounded Knee by the American Indian Movement, in 1973, when Brewer was a basketball coach at Pine Ridge School. The A.I.M. wanted the U.S. government to reexamine scores of treaties, which, they believed, had been broken. The

occupation, which included the site of the 1890 massacre, set off an intense dispute between A.I.M. supporters and a private paramilitary group funded by the existing tribal leadership, whom the A.I.M. had accused of corruption. In the three years following the seventy-one-day occupation, stabbings, shootings, and beatings related to the conflict became common, and by 1975, the impoverished Pine Ridge reservation, roughly the size of Delaware and Rhode Island combined, had the highest murder rate in the United States. Athletic directors from school districts across South Dakota refused to let their athletes play ball there.



Bryan Brewer.

Brewer, unable to schedule a full slate of games for his team, got on the phone and pleaded with coaches from native schools as far away as Kansas to play in a tournament on Pine Ridge. Seven schools signed on, and the first all-Indian tournament was a success. The tournament moved to Rapid City in 1979, its third year, and became the Lakota Nation Invitational; since then it has evolved into one of the premier showcases for “rez ball,” the run-and-gun, offense-first style of play that first caught on at reservation high schools in the nineteen-eighties. Over the years, the L.N.I. has widened its scope to become a winter homecoming of sorts for Native Americans all across the Dakotas, and a vital platform for fostering Lakota culture.

“This tournament started because of racism,” Brewer told the kids. “We wanted to work on reconciliation. What we’ve got now is something that’s much more than basketball.”

This past year, racism almost pushed the tournament out of Rapid City. On January 24, 2015, the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center was host to one of the uglier moments of the year



in American sports: chaperons ushered fifty-seven elementary-school kids from the Pine Ridge reservation out of a minor-league hockey game, after white businessmen allegedly hurled racial slurs (“Go back to the rez,” and “You’re Indians, you should be louder”) and sprayed beer on them from a party box above. A trial was held over the summer; the one man who was charged was found not guilty. (If convicted, he faced a maximum fine of five hundred dollars, for disorderly conduct. Some on and off the reservation wanted the incident tried as a hate crime.)

Native Americans in Rapid City have lodged complaints about racism and racial profiling by the police for years; in one notorious incident, from December, 2014, a thirty-year-old Native American man was skilled by a white police officer a day after marching in an anti-police-brutality rally. (The shooting was later ruled justified, and described by the Rapid City police chief as “suicide by cop.”) But the ugliness at the hockey game was a tipping point of sorts. After a chaperon named Justin Poor Bear posted about it on Facebook, and received attention across the Native American community, the Associated Press covered the story. The *Rapid City Journal* then ran a front-page headline asking, “Did Native students stand for National Anthem?” as if to offer a justification for the alleged harassment. (Two days later, the *Journal*’s editor apologized for the headline.) Citing safety concerns, the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council passed a resolution in February requesting that the L.N.I. be moved out of Rapid City, and the tournament’s board publicly announced that they were looking at moving to other cities. But it became apparent while talking to Brewer that some board members, at least, never seriously considered moving the L.N.I. elsewhere. Taking the tournament away from Rapid City and the Black Hills—which the Lakota people still want returned to them, citing a treaty broken in 1877—would set a bad precedent for Native American youth. The board decided to stay put.

“This is our home,” Brewer said. “They can’t run us out.” All of the schools in Pine Ridge ended up sending official representatives to the tournament—except for American Horse, the school attended by the “Lakota 57.”

I spent four days watching the Lakota Invitational from the bleachers, and I saw enough lob passes, breakaways, and uncontested layups to develop a love for the fast, loose, and improvisational offenses of rez ball. For weeks after the tournament, N.B.A. basketball still seemed halting and strange. In rez ball, set plays are scarce. Most teams run zone defenses instead of slower man-to-man, and relentless full-court presses and traps speed up the opposing offense. It’s an endurance game. At a morning matchup between the Red Cloud and Crow Creek girls’ teams, the sound of footsteps firing up and down the court drowned out the noise of the small crowd, and during one particularly fluid and unbroken stretch of play it felt as though I were watching an indoor half-marathon. The games feature a shot clock, adopted in 2006, which is a relative rarity for high-school games—but you never hear its buzzer, because somebody always shoots well in advance of the thirty-five-second limit.

When you *do* get to a rare break in play, you can pore over the players’ names in the program and wonder about the events that precipitated them. A few to ponder, from



various schools: Noah Comes Flying, Robert Looks Twice, Shyann Gray Grass, Jordan Rattling Leaf, Wiconi Walking Eagle, Louis Her Many Horses, JoDean Fast Wolf, Hoksila Moves Camp, Stevie Lone Dog, Adam Rough Surface, and Adriano Brings Him Back. When players were called out on the public-address system, their last names were often compressed. “Foul on No. 22 Roughsurface” or “Bringsimback” or “Comesflying” or “Movescamp.”

Meanwhile, cultural events took place in meeting areas spread across the convention center. One room was the setting for a language bowl: kids won points by repeating an English vocabulary word back to judges in its Lakota translation. I watched a match between teams from two “immersion schools,” one from the Standing Rock Reservation, in North Dakota, and another from the Cheyenne River Reservation, in South Dakota. The Lakota language is endangered; one organizer told me that only a handful of people under the age of thirty-five can speak it. Immersion schools, or “nests,” are an attempt to revive the language through instruction by fluent speakers. In the language bowl, some words thrown at the kids were more obscure than others: the six- and seven-year-olds offered furrowed brows at “dried corn” and “chokecherries.” But their legs swung excitedly under their chairs at softballs like star (wičháŋpi), tickle (yuš’iŋš’iŋ), fire (phéta), and winter (waníyetu).



A colorful scene in the stands at the Lakota Nation Invitational.

Outside, the civic center’s hallways were filled with the patter of teen-agers and trinket-sellers. There were tables set up where you could buy the New Lakota Dictionary, or declare your interest in signing up for the National Guard, or purchase a five-dollar raffle ticket to win a white 2005 Chrysler Sebring, which was parked out front and had new tires but some rust on the frame. A small choral group set up near a food court; I walked by as a teen-ager wearing a black Nirvana T-shirt sang “Silent Night” in Lakota.

Everywhere, people, programs, and pamphlets addressed the wave of teen suicide on Pine Ridge. During one game between girls’ teams, I was introduced to an outreach coördinator, who said that among the players on the court just then were kids who had survived suicide attempts. I watched another game with Brewer, who mentioned that Pine

Ridge School, his alma mater, had lost six teen-agers “to the spirit world” since late 2014. “It’s become an epidemic,” he said. In front of us, the Pine Ridge cheerleaders were missing the voice of Alanie Martin, a fourteen-year-old who loved basketball and cheered at the last L.N.I. She hanged herself a month later. Offsite, at the Lakota Nations Education Conference, which was held concurrently with the L.N.I., educators offered presentations about traumatic grief, suicide prevention, and indigenous well-being. On the tournament’s opening morning, an intertribal powwow was scheduled in a big, drafty hall, but the emcee, Pat Bad Hand, said it would be delayed a while, since “they’re still digging out in Rosebud.” A woman in a crimson coat, Wilma Red Bear, listened to drummers warm up and watched the first dancers unpack their feathered regalia and jingle dresses from rolling suitcases. She told me that the powwow would get started on “Indian time,” and that she heard there might be *wohanpi*, buffalo stew, served later. Red Bear was staying at a homeless shelter in Rapid City, but was originally from the town of Allen, on Pine Ridge. She asked if I had heard about the beer-spilling incident. More than anger, she said, she felt bad for the grown men responsible, “because racism is the greatest handicap in the world.” In front of us, a young girl danced in an apple-green shawl with a yellow fringe. She pivoted and twirled on the balls of her feet, in snow boots, off and on, until the drummers fired up in earnest and the powwow grew raucous, three hours later.

The next day there was a poetry slam: thirteen high-school competitors were asked to “tell their truths” in front of a microphone. The teen-agers delivered verses on Donald Trump, Facebook, love, sex, music, suicide, and Wounded Knee. I sat in the back row next to three cheerleaders whose blue uniforms matched the hair of the eventual winner, Marcus Ruff, a seventeen-year-old junior from Red Cloud. Later that afternoon, Ruff was invited to present his winning poem at center court during halftime of a basketball game. Ruff read forcefully over the arena’s P.A., pausing after the last lines: “Ghost dance your way to oblivion / Break bones like treaties / Gentrify your humanity / Until you can’t afford to be human.” The crowd cheered as if he’d buried a game-winner.

The L.N.I. is still primarily a basketball tournament, but more students, about four hundred, were there to compete in “hand games,” a kind of guessing game traditionally used to settle disputes between tribes. Teams of four or more took turns hiding two pairs of “bones,” one marked, one not, in their hands. The kids used the pockets of their sweatshirts to switch the marked bone from one hand to the other, while singers and drummers carried on loudly behind them, both to conjure good spirits and to rattle the other team’s guesser.

A mentor named Jeremiah Moreno, from Denver, showed me how to play the game; while he was explaining it, a toddler hobbled over and kicked the pile of sixteen shiny sticks used to keep score. Everyone laughed. Moreno said that if a dog had wandered in and ruined a high-stakes game between tribes hundreds of years ago, that dog probably would have been made into soup. But children are called “wakǰányeža,” Moreno explained: sacred beings, walking among us. “We let them do whatever they want,” he said.

Brewer had told me that the “Lakota love an underdog,” and back on the court, the tournament had found one in tiny Winnebago, which has a high-school enrollment of a hundred and forty-eight, from the Ho-Chunk tribal reservation in Nebraska. The team had taken a twelve-hour charter-bus ride through the snowstorm to get to Rapid City. Winnebago was blowing through the competition, trapping and outrunning its way to wide-margin wins—rez ball distilled. It was Winnebago’s first Lakota Invitational: the team scored an invitation after winning Nebraska’s C1 state tournament last spring, despite ranking, in size, fifty-sixth among the fifty-nine schools. It was the school’s first state championship in seventy-five years. Winnebago mostly plays what one parent called “white schools,” since there aren’t many other tribal high schools in Nebraska. After their first state-tournament game, a volunteer online play-by-play announcer, imagining how the reservation might celebrate the triumph, called Winnebago’s victory a “firewater win.” He apologized, but was promptly dismissed.

Winnebago’s victories at the L.N.I. were largely the work of David Wingett, a lanky but broad-shouldered six-foot-seven junior, who played center. Wingett scored with long jump shots and fierce drives, and he played with obvious emotion. He wore No. 50, his mother, Winnebago chairwoman Darla LaPointe, told me, to honor his brother Nicholas, who died in a car accident the summer after Wingett was in second grade. In the final, against defending L.N.I. champion White River, Wingett started out cold, banging a procession of three-point shots against the rim, and White River hung around, trailing by seven at the half. After the break, Wingett scored, and the game stopped briefly to acknowledge his thousandth high-school point. Then he got on a roll. Winnebago would win by thirty-three. On one fast break, after the outcome was certain, Wingett found himself alone in the key. He leaped, spun, and threw down a reverse, two-handed dunk. Fans of both teams roared.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.newyorker.com/news/sporting-scene/a-native-american-basketball-tournament-bounces-back>

## **An Indigenous Friendly Nation State?**

Duane Champagne

1/31/16

Most indigenous Peoples are willing to participate in national government institutions, but at the same time want to retain their own ways of self-government, land, and cultural orientations. Single cultural nation states encourage all citizens to adopt the culture, government, constitution, and property laws of the nation state. The indigenous position is that indigenous nations have their own forms of government, worldviews, property rights, and territories.

Consequently, single, or predominantly single, cultural nation states believe that it is in the best interests of the nation and the Indigenous Peoples to join into the single cultural nation state by accepting national institutions. Assimilation of all individuals into a

unified national cultural and government is the aim of single cultural nation states. The processes of cultural assimilation in single cultural nation states may be contested by cultural ethnic groups and indigenous nations. Efforts of forced education, non-consensual citizenship, and the absence of political empowerment by non-mainstream and indigenous nations often leads to abuses of human rights and indigenous rights.

In recent decades, United Nations diplomats argue that many nation states have come to the realization that many of their citizens may have multiple cultural orientations. Consequently, nation states have increasingly come to recognize differences in race, religion, ethnicity, culture, and indigeneity. The diplomats suggest that in the future nation states will increasingly address human rights issues and empower greater cultural, ethnic, racial and indigenous diversities.

There is general agreement that democratic nation states are best, and most nations of the world currently have constitutional governments. The basis of the United Nations is built upon the organization as a coalition of democratic nation states. Therefore, nation states and their cultural minorities need to work out justice and human rights issues through the organizations of democratic nation states and through their combined international agencies. Certainly, or at least hopefully, more nation states will become more culturally diversified and democratic within the multicultural nation state interpretation.

In many ways, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)) works within the multi-cultural democratic state models. Indigenous Peoples have rights to their cultural orientations and worldviews, however, the expression of those rights must be expressed or upheld within the national institutions of the multi-cultural nation state. In UNDRIP, Indigenous Peoples are encouraged to adopt local municipal governments that conform to a national constitutional government, while the municipal government can incorporate indigenous laws, norms, and self-government.

However, conflicts over property, law, and self-government that conflict with federal or provincial laws are decided in favor of the nation state. Within UNDRIP, Indigenous Peoples can live under their own local or municipal governments, but are still subject to the higher powers of provincial and federal law, government, and cultural order. The multi-cultural nation state approach is better and more in conformity with preserving human and collective rights, but are not in conformity with indigenous rights. Indigenous nations want to have more egalitarian, non-unilateral, respectful, negotiated, and consensual political relations with provincial and federal nation state governments.

As recent as 2010, Bolivia created a new name for their nation: The Plurinational State of Bolivia. Plurinational refers to a nation state that has plural political communities with differing worldviews that are recognized within the constitution. It is no accident that Bolivia and other countries like Ecuador are exploring asymmetrical constitutional orders that recognize the autonomy and self-government of Indigenous Peoples. Bolivia is a country where Indigenous Peoples form the majority of the national population.

Most nation states grant Indigenous Peoples equal citizenship under single cultural nation state mode, while multi-cultural states grant more recognition of municipal government

cultural, but not political or territorial autonomy. Plurinational states may provide a nation state framework that constitutionally recognizes and respects indigenous rights to self-government, land, and cultural diversity, while upholding national government and cooperation.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/31/indigenous-friendly-nation-state-163189>

## Museum focuses on Native American history



Gale Stevens adjusts a dreamcatcher on the wall of the Sarpy County Museum. This year, the Sarpy County Museum will feature an exhibit and events with a Native American theme.

POSTED: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2016 1:00 AM

By Michael Batchelder / Breeze Staff Writer

The Sarpy County Museum will highlight Native American history as its theme this year. This will include an exhibit showing some of the artifacts and history of Native Americans in Sarpy County, especially the Omaha tribe, as well as monthly events involving Native American history.

In 2015, World War II was chosen as the theme, marking the 70-year anniversary of the end of the war, but the Sarpy County Museum staff had considered Native American history as a theme for years.

“This year, we felt it was time to address it,” Sarpy County Museum Executive Director Ben Justman said.

Justman spoke of the unique history of the Native Americans in Sarpy County, especially in many areas that have now been developed. The ground where Twin Creek Cinema stands, for example, was once a village of the Omaha tribe. One of the most noteworthy

Native Americans in Sarpy County history is Chief Big Elk, the last full-blooded Omaha chief, as well as his grandson, Logan Fontenelle.

On display at the museum are many Native American artifacts, especially of the Omaha tribe, including pottery, arrowheads, dreamcatchers and traditional clothing.

Some of the items on display are from the 1800s, while others are from a more recent time.

“They’re not all 150 years old, but the artistry that goes into them is still pretty neat,” Justman said.

Many of the items on display were donated by Dr. Anthony Yonkers, who worked as an ear, nose and throat doctor at the Pine Ridge Reservation for many years and had a collection of Native American themed crafts he donated to the museum.

Justman expects as the year goes on, Sarpy County residents will loan the museum plenty of their own historical artifacts to be displayed.

“It never fails, whenever we do an exhibit, people will come up to us and say ‘I’ve got this, would you like to add it to the exhibit?’” Justman said.

The monthly programs that the museum hosts also will emphasize Native American themes.

February’s program will be “Sometimes Freedom Wears a Woman’s Face: Native Woman Veterans of World War II,” a presentation by Creighton University’s Dr. Pamela Bennett at 2 p.m. on Feb. 28.

Justman also hopes to lead a guided tour of the Native American history of Fontenelle Forest this fall.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.omaha.com/sarpy/gretna/museum-focuses-on-native-american-history/article\\_9c66a3d4-baca-5e74-ab06-253db4e7fac7.html](http://www.omaha.com/sarpy/gretna/museum-focuses-on-native-american-history/article_9c66a3d4-baca-5e74-ab06-253db4e7fac7.html)

## Hawks: More support for Native American health care

Patrick Anderson, [panderson@argusleader.com](mailto:panderson@argusleader.com) 12:23 p.m. CST February 1, 2016



(Photo: Elisha Page / Argus Leader)



A Democratic challenger for South Dakota's U.S. House seat called Monday for better Native American health care, blasting her opponent for not being more supportive of federally funded programs that serve reservations.

State Rep. Paula Hawks of Hartford announced in August she would make a run for the U.S. House of Representatives. Hawks was critical of incumbent Republican Kristi Noem for not advocating for state Medicaid expansion and for not preventing funding cuts to Indian Health Service.

"Unfortunately, South Dakota's congresswoman and her colleagues in Washington, D.C., have been busy playing political games with people's lives, instead of banding together to create a better situation," Hawks said at a news conference in Sioux Falls.

Noem described Native American health care as an "emergency situation" in a January interview with Argus Leader Media. Noem asked federal officials for more information on health care facilities on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations last month, and said she planned to start an investigation into both programs.

Hawks said Noem could do more to support a push by Gov. Dennis Daugaard to expand Medicaid in South Dakota. The governor's plan would increase access to health care for about 50,000 South Dakotans.

Hawks said she would improve health care for Native Americans by restoring and increasing funding for IHS and by being an advocate for expanding Medicaid in South Dakota.

She met with tribal leaders last week from South Dakota's reservations, where high suicide rates and drug use are top concerns, Hawks said. Bolstering mental health services for Native Americans could help the state find an answer to those complex problems.

"Being able to provide assistance to them is of utmost importance," Hawks said. "Those are two things we can tackle by improving IHS services."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2016/02/01/hawks-more-support-native-american-health-care/79643810/>

## **My Voice: Native American mascots are not OK**

**Mato Standing Soldier** 3:15 p.m. CST January 31, 2016





(Photo: submitted)

My name is Mato Standing Soldier, and I'm a senior at Lincoln High School in Sioux Falls. Recently, a letter I wrote was published in my school's newspaper, the *Statesman*. The letter was in response to an editorial in a previous *Statesman* issue claiming Native American mascots are permissible, as long as they "honor the tribe" from which they originate. I found this claim not only wrong, but detrimental to Lincoln's student body. This notion cannot be spread throughout school that Indian logos and mascots are OK, as long as they honor the culture and race they mock. Since my letter has received recognition from tribal groups and anti-racism organizations nationwide, I have been urged to share it with the *Argus Leader's* readers.

Letter to the *Statesman* editors:

*In the December issue of the Statesman, I found a discomfoting quote in a staff-written article in the Opinion section. The article was about whether or not Native American sports mascots are offensive to the race they're named after. I found no fault in this article, until the closing paragraph, which concluded that these mascots and logos are permissible if they, "promote the Native nations," that they base their name off of.*

I strongly disagree. Why? Well, first let's explain where these "honorable" names originated.

"Redskins," the name for the Washington, D.C., NFL team, is a slander towards Native Americans and as offensive as any racial slur directed towards another group of people. Many organizations that advocate for the abolition of Native American logos and mascots avoid even saying the word, referring to it as the R-word. The R-word dates back to when bounties were promised for the execution of Native Americans. Their scalps, cleaned of any "red skin" (blood), were brought back by the bounty hunters for proof of execution.

While the R-word is one of the more grotesque names used by sports teams, a name like the Cleveland Indians, or Florida State Seminoles, is just as offensive. Although these names are not racial slurs, American Indians have been oppressed for hundreds of years, and to us, it feels like these mascots are making a mockery of our pain and struggle. Naming a team the Cleveland Indians is equivalent to naming a team the Chicago Negroes.

Now, some think that using these names for modern day sports teams is a way to honor and recognize Native culture. Since sports teams wish to portray themselves as strong, resilient warriors, it's only fitting to name themselves after one of America's toughest combatants, right?

Wrong. These names mock Native Americans. They remind us of the past, when our land was stolen and we were killed for profit. It reminds us that we were once considered inferior, and enemies of America. While the team owners may intend no harm, the effects on Native Americans are extremely damaging. Scientific studies prove these mascots lower the self-esteem of tribal children.

I cannot let my classmates think that these names in anyway honor Native culture. Native American logos and mascots remind me that my ancestors were once called "savages," who needed to be exterminated for the betterment of America. Because Indian mascots put us in a historical box and continue to harm our children, I believe they must be abolished.

## **MY VOICE**

**Mato Standing Soldier**, 18, is a senior at Lincoln High School. He is involved in football, local music, Dakota Academy of Performing Arts and the Creative Writing Club. My Voice columns should be 500 to 700 words. Submissions should include a portrait-type photograph of the author. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships.

Send columns to Argus Leader, Box 5034, Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5034, fax them to 605-331-2294 or email them to [letters@argusleader.com](mailto:letters@argusleader.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.argusleader.com/story/opinion/voices/2016/01/31/voice-native-american-mascots-ok/79608778/>

## **Brown faculty will vote whether to call Columbus Day 'Indigenous People's Day'**

The holiday has been called 'Fall Weekend' since 2009.



The last vote concerning the holiday took

**By Allison Pohle** [@AllisonPohle](#)

Boston.com Staff | 02.02.16 | 12:43 PM

Brown University faculty will vote Tuesday on whether to rename the holiday once called Columbus Day to “Indigenous People’s Day.”

The holiday hasn’t been called Columbus Day on campus since 2009. At that time, students were eager to change the name from “Columbus Day” to something entirely different, said Elizabeth Hoover, a Brown assistant professor of american studies and ethnic studies who was a grad student in 2009. A student group called “Natives at Brown” preferred Indigenous People’s Day, but the rest of the student body voted to change it to “Fall Weekend.”

The name stuck for a few years, but, as part of the campus demonstrations that took place nationwide this past fall, the activist group demanded further action from the university, and launched a [petition to change the name](#) in October.

“Although the current name of the holiday, ‘Fall Weekend,’ halts the active celebration of Columbus’ torture and genocide and the dawn of the transatlantic slave trade, this is the bare minimum that Brown University can do,” they wrote.

Since then, more than 1,220 people have signed it. The group said that calling the holiday Indigenous People’s Day is not simply symbolic or political posturing. It’s part of their continuing fight for visibility on their campus.

“Renaming the holiday Indigenous People’s Day has the power to transform this day into a celebration of the cultures and histories of the original inhabitants of the Americas,” they wrote, “and students on campus at Brown in the past, present and future.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.boston.com/news/education/2016/02/02/brown-faculty-will-vote-whether-call-columbus-day-indigenous-people-day/XPPTSiheavrJ6H8l7fQEL/story.html>

# 'The Oregon Trail' could have used a Native American viewpoint, co-creator says

BY JOSHUA BARAJAS *February 1, 2016 at 6:15 PM EST*

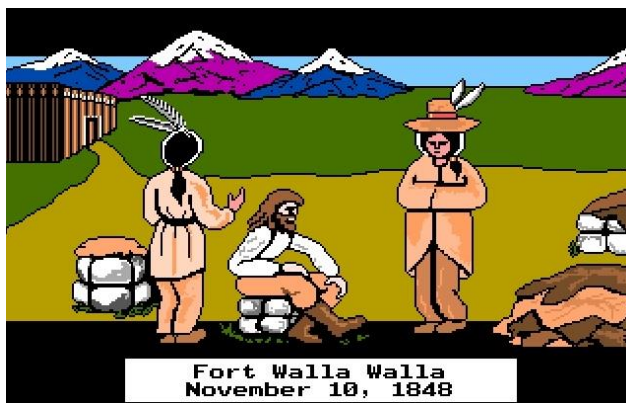


*A still from an early version of “The Oregon Trail” computer game that taught school children how to navigate the pioneer life in the mid-1880s in America. Image from Internet Archive*

One of the three co-creators of “The Oregon Trail,” took to Reddit on Monday to field questions on the video game, which introduced scores of school children to the trials and tribulations of pioneer life in America, including bouts with dysentery.

Don Rawitsch said he “wanted a game to help me teach about the Westward Movement in the mid-1800s,” but added in the Reddit thread that the game was missing a Native American viewpoint.

“Oregon Trail” is populated with helpful Native American characters, but their back stories are never explored, nor does the educational game shift from the perspective of its white, male protagonist, who leads a group of settlers from Independence, Missouri to the Willamette Valley in Oregon.



*Image from Internet Archive*

Invented in 1971, the game gives players with a set amount of money to buy essential gear, food and teams of oxen. Along the way, the wagoners could suffer from snake bites, broken limbs, various illnesses (fevers, typhoid, measles, cholera, oh my!) and experience delays from strong thunderstorms and blizzards on the 2,200-mile journey. Players can also customize tombstone epitaphs for anyone who dies in their party, including their own.

Rawitsch also shared his thoughts on the “gamification” of education, a tip on when to ford a river, and, of course, whether he’s had dysentery. Here are some of his best responses:

**Q: Is there anything you wanted to include in the game but had to cut due to memory limitations?**

*Not due to memory (well, maybe my own). But it would have been interesting to add a Native American viewpoint, perhaps a character who watches the wagons come into that territory.*

A Reddit commenter then asked if people complained about the negative portrayal of Native Americans, who would sometimes in the game attack wagon trains on the trail. Rawitsch said these attackers weren’t actually Native Americans.

*We were careful in the original version to say “riders attack.” In fact, often the attacks came from white bandits, not Indians.*

**Q: “Gamification” is a popular topic of research right now for its potential impact on education and training programs. Do you still feel like history is a good candidate for acquiring knowledge through simulation/games.**

*Absolutely. It gives people a chance to “feel” history by participating. It provides a way to “test” the results of alternative historical outcomes. But history is also enlivened by stories, so you need to read it as well.*

Later in the thread, Rawitsch also said, “Play is critical, especially for younger kids, but there are still ways of making learning fascinating for older kids.”

*Video by YouTube user hkasuki*

**Q: What is the strangest bug/error you encountered while making the game?**

*Once some kids from Alaska wrote MECC claiming to have a fool proof method for winning. They entered a negative number for food spending which the program subtracted from their money, which actually added to their money. They got rich. We quickly added an input check to all money questions to reject negative numbers!*

**Q: Would you ever recommend fording the river under any circumstance?**

*Fording the river usually works if the water is shallow (say 2-3 feet). River depth is displayed for the player in the personal computer version of the game.*

**Q: What will you put on your tombstone?**

*He helped kids learn.*

**Q: Have you personally ever had dysentery?**

*No, thank goodness.*

*A 1990 version of “The Oregon Trail” is available to play on the Internet Archive.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/the-oregon-trail-could-have-used-a-native-american-viewpoint-says-co-creator/>

## Native American Rapper Responds To Macklemore’s “White Privilege 2”

February 2, 2016

by Houston Williams (@AllHipHopcom)

Music News, News, Reviews / Music.

**(AllHipHop News)** A new song from an Indigenous brother of Hip-Hop is taking Macklemore to task after writing the controversial song “White Privilege 2.”

Gyasi Ross, a Native of America, responds to the song, requesting that his fellow Seattle peer “pass the mic” and let others speak for themselves. He relayed his exact feelings on the song and offered up “White Privilege III” as a lyrical response to Macklemore’s “well-intentioned piece.”

*White Privilege III is obviously a response to Macklemore’s well-intentioned piece, ‘White Privilege II.’ Yet, White Privilege III is much bigger than one song as Macklemore is simply the latest in a very long line of white liberals who chose to play the white savior role and speak for brown-skinned people instead of providing the platform for them to speak for themselves. He’s neither the first nor the greatest, only the latest. We must resist that tendency and push white people who wish to be allies to, instead of attempting to speak for us, passing the mic and leveraging their platforms to let us speak for ourselves. Specifically, if Macklemore indeed wished to limit the universe of parties affected by white privilege and ignore Muslims, Latinos, Natives, Asians, etc. as he did in this song, I suppose that’s his prerogative. Still, if he truly wishes to be an ally he should put marginalized voices to the forefront instead of simply consulting with them and keeping the glory for his white guilt epiphany for himself. The next step in the evolution of the ally is simply to utilize her/his platform and make the introduction, get off the stage*

*and let the stakeholder speak for themselves; for the stakeholder to become the subject and not the object.*

*Pass the mic.*

**Direct Link:** <http://allhiphop.com/2016/02/02/native-american-rapper-responds-to-macklemores-white-privilege-2/>

## **Native American tribe, Scott push \$1.8B expansion plan to win gambling deal**



Gov. Rick Scott, center, talks with James Allen, CEO of Seminole Gaming, at the tribe's headquarters, Monday, Feb. 1, 2016, in Hollywood, Fla. Scott and the tribe seek to increase pressure on state lawmakers to approve a new gaming compact by unveiling a \$1.8 billion expansion plan at the tribe's Hollywood and Tampa locations that would potentially create thousands of jobs. Scott and Seminole Chairman James Billie signed the new compact in December, but so far it has languished in the legislature.

By CURT ANDERSON | Associated Press February 01, 2016 4:30PM

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — Gov. Rick Scott and the Seminole Tribe of Florida sought Monday to increase pressure on state lawmakers to approve a gambling deal with a proposed \$1.8 billion expansion they said would create thousands of jobs at two casinos.

Scott and Seminole Chairman James Billie signed the seven-year compact in December, but it has languished in the state Legislature's annual session. Scott, Billie and other tribe officials met Monday at the Seminoles' Hollywood headquarters to make a renewed push for approval with the expansion plan as a sweetener.

"I think this is the biggest compact ever signed in this country," Scott said. "I think it's fair to the state of Florida and it's fair to the Seminoles."

The Seminoles say the expansion at its Hollywood and Tampa locations would create over 4,800 permanent full-time jobs and over 14,500 construction jobs. Seminole Gaming CEO James Allen said the tribe needs the certainty of the proposed compact to move forward and noted that the tribe had kept its promises under the previous compact, including paying Florida more than \$1 billion.



"The Seminoles have done what we said we would do," Allen said.

The deal would provide Florida \$3 billion over seven years in exchange for limits on the tribe's competition and other guarantees, including allowing it to operate table games such as roulette and craps at its seven casinos. The deal also allows for the addition of slot machines at a Palm Beach county dog track, leaves an opening for another casino in Miami-Dade, and would allow existing tracks in that county and in Broward to eventually add blackjack tables.

So far, the compact has not been voted on by any Florida House or Senate committees. Various gambling and anti-gambling interests are likely to suggest changes, which Scott would have to approve for it to become law.

"We need the support of the governor in order to move this. I will tell you, we are optimistic," Allen said.

The governor also heard Monday from several tribal members and casino facility employees who described how the previous compact, approved in 2010, helped them economically and warned of job losses if the new one is not approved, particularly for table games employees. There are about 3,500 such employees now, according to the tribe.

"I have been able to grow here," said Patricia Rodriguez, a table games supervisor. "This agreement not being signed would affect me and the people I work with. It would affect them immensely."

A further complication is a federal lawsuit filed in October by the tribe against the state after a key portion of the previous compact expired. That lawsuit, set for trial in July in Tallahassee, would decide whether the Seminoles can continue to have blackjack tables.

Under the expansion plan, an electric-guitar-shaped, 800-room hotel would rise at the Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood along with restaurants, bars, swimming pools and a "music memorabilia experience" for its collection of artists' instruments, clothes and other items. The total number of guestrooms in Hollywood would top 1,200.

At Seminole Hard Rock Tampa, a second 500-room hotel tower would be built, as well as new shops, restaurants and bars, and an enlarged banquet area. It also would get a helipad site.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.nwfdailynews.com/news/20160201/native-american-tribe-scott-push-18b-expansion-plan-to-win-gambling-deal?template=printart>

## West Hartford's Hall, Conard Student Pep Squads Drop Native American-Related Names



The former Hall and Conard High School logos.

### **Kristin Stoller**

Student-led pep clubs at West Hartford's high schools have dropped Native-American names

WEST HARTFORD — Student-led pep squads at both Hall and Conard high schools have decided to drop the Native American-related names that many found offensive.

The change comes after students, staff and parents raised concerns over T-shirts with Native American imagery that were being offered for sale by unsanctioned student groups last week. The school board recommended discontinuing the school logos — which both depicted Indian men wearing feathers — in 2015. The 2015-16 school year started with new logos, but the team names were kept.

Both principals met with their respective pep club leaders and Superintendent Tom Moore said he also met with a group of students after they requested a meeting. Moore said the students had taken orders for the shirts but did not have them made.

Students at Hall High School maintained "The Rez" pep club, short for "The Reservation," which is not a school-sanctioned club, but this week changed the group's name to "Hall Super Fans," until a permanent name can be determined.



West Hartford High Schools Get New, Non-Native American Logos

On Sunday, the group posted on Twitter: "The shirts with the logo were never sold nor worn by anyone, and we are not selling them."

At the start of this school year, Conard students changed the name of their pep club, "The Tribe," to "The Red C," which is school sanctioned. Recently, the fan section had posted designs of a new shirt with Native American imagery and the words, "Return of the Tribe," said Brian Wilson, student council co-president.

"After much deliberation we have decided to continue as the Red C. Doing so protects the Chieftain name which is bigger than the Tribe," according to the group's Twitter post.

"Our fan section has always been about supporting our teams, and we want those teams to remain the Chieftains. #chieftainpride"

Representatives from both groups could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

In a letter to the Conard student body Friday morning, Wilson and co-president Mamata Malla asked students to think carefully about buying and selling the T-shirts.

Wilson said in a statement Tuesday that he was pleased with the outcome, and it was "times like these" that Conard students show maturity many think high-schoolers don't have.

"The problem rooted from a lack of understanding," Wilson said. "Now that we are more aware of the policy and what it means, we are all as a school and town more conscience of our actions and are able to prevent problems like this from happening in the future."

Leah Kelly, a Conard junior, said she was happy about the name change, but was disappointed that a few of the fan club's more vocal leaders are hesitant to give up everything to do with Native American culture, such as the Chieftain name.

"It's fine to have the pride and to hold on to the tradition of pride for your school, but the fact that it is just this one mascot that they can't let go of is kind of baffling to me and also just frustrating," she said. "It's so hard for people to see that there are things more important in this world than the tradition in one town and in one school."

Judy Wyman Kelly, Leah Kelly's mom and a West Hartford Human Rights Commission member, said it's a good start that the fan club leaders have decided to abide by the school board's guidelines and abandon Native American imagery.

"Native Americans are people, not mascots," she said. "I look forward to the day when everyone accepts this fact."

At the board of education's meeting Tuesday night, Moore said Conard's "Red C" group is currently designing different shirts to offer the student body. The purpose of these fan groups are to bring students together, Moore said.

"Sometimes I feel like there is a moment you have to hit to move past things," he said. "I really hope where this is the time that we can move past this issue."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.courant.com/community/west-hartford/hc-west-hartford-conard-hall-pep-club-name-change-0203-20160202-story.html>

## **Arizona Senator Begay To Hold First Native American Youth Summit**

By [Lauren Gilger](#)

Feb. 2, 2016

From poverty to high dropout rates, Native American kids and teens on and off reservations in Arizona often face incredible challenges, according to State Senator Carlyle Begay.

Begay, senator of District 7, grew up on the Navajo Nation and recently announced he'll be organizing the first ever statewide Native American Youth Summit this April to address some of those issues and empower a new generation of Native Americans.

"We have the largest high school dropout rate of any racial or ethnic group; we have the lowest high school graduation rate," Begay said. "It should be alarming."

He's targeting middle school and high school students from schools on and off the reservation to attend the summit, which is expected to be held at Grand Canyon University on April 30. Begay said he hopes the summit will gather young Native Americans and help them to see that they are the future of their communities.

The summit is planned in partnership with the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family and the Morning Star Youth Leadership Council, a nonprofit dedicated to Native American youth in the Phoenix area.

Begay said he wants the summit to be completely youth-led. So, the Morning Star Youth Leadership Council picked the issues that they want to discuss at the summit themselves. Those include health issues such as mental health and substance abuse issues, education and scholarships, and social issues like bullying and texting while driving, Begay said.

Begay also said the students are interested in highlighting American Indian policy.

"I think for them it was fundamentally about the importance of how far our tribal communities have come, but also the context of the different areas of policies that benefitted, or even have harmed, our tribal communities and making sure that we understand and have context of our history," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://kjzz.org/content/259717/arizona-senator-begay-hold-first-native-american-youth-summit>

# Brown University Just Voted to Replace Columbus Day With Indigenous People's Day

## .Mic

By Marie Solis February 6, 2016 11:55 AM

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On Tuesday, faculty members at Brown University voted to rename their fall break to recognize Indigenous People's Day, choosing to honor Native Americans instead of explorer and colonist Christopher Columbus.

According to the [Brown Daily Herald](#), the school had already shifted away from acknowledging the national holiday in 2009, when the student group Native Americans at Brown requested the name be changed on the school's official academic calendar. The university responded by renaming Columbus Day weekend to the "neutral" Fall Weekend.

But for the 1,100 faculty, staff, students and alumni who signed a petition calling the university to adopt Indigenous People's Day, there was a better option than that. "The change from the neutral name of Fall Weekend recognizes both the role and the plight of Native Americans currently and historically," professor Thomas Roberts, chair of the Faculty Executive Committee, told the *Herald*.

There is a well-established [precedent](#) for Indigenous People's Day subsuming Columbus Day, not just at universities but in entire cities and states, including Minneapolis, Seattle, Berkley, California, and all of Alaska.



A demonstration for Indigenous People's Day in Seattle

Students have campaigned for the change since October, calling the initial move to "Fall Weekend" the "bare minimum," according to another story in the [Herald](#). The issue got more attention when the newspaper published what the daily paper acknowledged as two

"racist" op-eds, one of which argued that indigenous people should be grateful for the colonization spurred by Columbus.

When the university posted the news to [Facebook](#), comments were mixed. Some questioned whether the university should focus on other issues and others were just confused.

"Did Brown, in fairness and with due respect for the consequences of defaulted student loans, also enact a Gratitude for Taxpayers Day?" [asked](#) one commenter. "No? My analysis ends here; that's a dreadfully biased organization."

Others on the thread reminded fellow users that while a simple name change won't repair the harm already done, Indigenous People's Day is a step toward addressing the [systematic violence](#) perpetuated against Native Americans.

Another student wrote, "As a current student, I think it's only right that the day be renamed in honor of the millions who were cheated, invaded, and murdered by, among countless others, Columbus."

Sierra Edd and Kara Roanhorse, two sophomores in leadership positions for Native Americans at Brown, told the *Herald* they counted the name change as a win, but know there's much more work to do. They said, "Though we have seen a victory today, Indigenous People's Day on the campus calendar is not the end of indigenous students' demands to the university."

**Direct Link:** <http://news.yahoo.com/brown-university-just-voted-replace-165500977.html>

## Sweden's indigenous Sami people win rights battle against state

Court grants Arctic village rights over hunting and fishing after lawyers for state were accused of 'rhetoric of race biology'



Sami reindeer herders in northern Sweden. Photograph: Alamy  
**David Crouch in Gothenburg**

Wednesday 3 February 2016 13.05 GMTLast modified on Wednesday 3 February 201622.01 GMT

Sweden's nomadic reindeer herders have won a 30-year battle for land rights in a court case that has seen the state accused of racism towards the country's only indigenous people.

A decision in Gällivare district court on Wednesday granted the tiny Sami village of Girjas, inside the Arctic Circle, exclusive rights to control hunting and fishing in the area, restoring powers stripped from the Sami people, or Laplanders, by Sweden's parliament in 1993.

"It is a symbolic step towards getting Sami rights acknowledged, and we hope that this verdict can shape policies towards Sami issues in Sweden, that was the main goal," said Åsa Larsson Blind, vice-president of the Sami Council, which represents Sami people in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia.

After a long struggle during which the Swedish Sami Association petitioned the European commission and the court of human rights, the case came to court in Sweden last year.

Lawyers for the state claimed that the indigenous status of the Samis was irrelevant to the case. "Sweden has in this matter no international obligations to recognise special rights of the Sami people, whether they are indigenous or not," they said.



Sami people in northern Sweden. Photograph: Alamy

[In an open letter](#), 59 academic researchers, including ethnographers and anthropologists at the Sami Research Centre at Umeå University, condemned the lawyers for using the "rhetoric of race biology" and revealing "a surprising ignorance of historical conditions".

The Sami-Swedish artist and singer Sofia Jannok wrote: "The state wants to erase us from history."



Larsson Blind said she was relieved that the court had seen through the “colonial speech” of state representatives. “By getting this verdict, many Sami individuals will feel strengthened after hearing the harsh wording used in the court,” she said.

Although the case concerned only a small geographical area, it came out of a far more general frustration that Sami issues were getting nowhere in the political arena, where they were debated endlessly but no decisions were taken, Larsson Blind said.

The attorney general, Anna Skarhed, defended the state’s legal position last year and said there was “no question that the Sami are an indigenous people, but that is not the issue”. Lawyers may yet appeal, meaning the case could drag on for many more years, Larsson Blind said.

Welcoming the verdict, the chairman of Girjas village, Matti Berg, told Swedish media: “It is a long struggle and we have been victorious, I am so happy and relieved.” Berg faced threats of violence after the case was launched last year.

Some local Swedes are suspicious, however. “The next step will be restrictions on snowmobiling and moose hunting,” said Robert Björk, a hunter from Kiruna.

“The court’s decision is worrying for the hunters up here, but I assume that the verdict will be appealed [against],” Birgitta Isaksson from the Swedish Hunters Association in Kiruna told SVT.

Sweden does not register the ethnicity of its citizens, so exact numbers are not known, but about 20,000 Sami are estimated to live there, with a minority continuing the traditional reindeer-herding way of life. The [Sami language](#) was recognised as an official minority language in 2000.

Sweden’s Sami are also battling plans by Britain’s Beowulf Mining to mine iron ore in the country’s far north. “The verdict has no direct effect on mining plans, but it is one piece of the puzzle to get Sami land rights acknowledged so we can get more influence on mining,” Larsson Blind said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/03/sweden-indigenous-sami-people-win-rights-battle-against-state>

## **How indigenous land rights factor into climate goals**

A panel of forest policy groups pressed for more action Wednesday, saying the public and the private sector could help raise awareness about the toll efforts to designate forests as ‘protected’ or increase agricultural production can have on indigenous people.

By Max Lewontin, [Staff](#) FEBRUARY 4, 2016



Recognizing the land rights and concerns of indigenous people should be a key part of global efforts to stop deforestation, an international network of forest policy groups said at a meeting in London on Wednesday.

But the public and private sector businesses that are involved in producing and extracting commodities in developing countries need to put more pressure on local governments to recognize the land rights of indigenous people, argued panelists at the meeting organized by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI).

"I think we are on the brink of major change, both for saving forests and recognizing rights, but it's going to require a push for governments to take that next step," Andy White, RRI's coordinator, [told the Thomson Reuters Foundation](#).

Without that pressure, he and other experts warned, efforts to meet a global climate change goal set at the recent Paris talks of keeping the change [below two degrees Celsius](#) could be imperiled.



**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE** Climate change: Is your opinion informed by science? Take our quiz!



**PHOTOS OF THE DAY** Photos of the weekend

The Paris agreement emphasizes the importance of respecting indigenous rights as countries consider protecting forests as a means to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide that warm the planet, the Thomson Reuters Foundation notes.

RRI said in a [report released Wednesday](#) that a rising number of businesses and politicians do realize that understanding local peoples' concerns are a key aspect of efforts to use natural resources and plans to expand agricultural production.

Countries such as Indonesia, Peru, and Liberia are set to make legal changes or unveil policies aimed at giving local communities greater security about their land.

But new research by TMP Systems, a British consulting firm, finds that efforts to protect forests by turning them into reserves may underestimate that impact of such efforts on indigenous people.

Efforts that use international funding to designate 12 to 15 percent of the forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo as protected, and Norwegian funds to designate 30 percent of Liberia's forests as protected, could impact an estimated 1.3 million people, by displacing them or threatening their income, the report found.

RRI found that governments have increased the amount of forest land they recognize as legally owned by indigenous people or local communities over time. They now recognize ownership rights to 388 million hectares of forests — more than five times the size of Chile — up from 300 million in 2002, the group said in a release.

But efforts to “designate” land rather than recognize the ownership rights of local people are not a viable solution, the group said. It also cast doubts on efforts of companies to assuage conflicts with local populations concerned about the impacts of industries like mining through monetary compensation.

The group's analysis of nearly 400 conflicts in mining, agriculture, infrastructure energy, and forestry projects found that 93 percent of the disputes with local

populations weren't about money, but about other issues, such as environmental degradation or how the projects curbed access to local resources.

Last year, the two firms found that 93 to 99 percent of a range of commercial natural resource development projects in eight developing countries were taking place on land inhabited by indigenous people.

The groups say private investors and the public should push for an approach that puts the land rights of indigenous people first, and consider modifying efforts to improve global climate change by designating large swaths of forest land as protected.

"It has become increasingly clear to the private sector that people cannot be pushed aside with impunity – the conflicts that result have long-reaching and very costly impacts," Mr. White said on Wednesday, according to RRI's release.

The case of Liberia, which is currently considering legislation to guarantee the land rights of people in rural areas but is struggling to reach a decision, according to environmental groups, is instructive for other policymakers, he added.

Lou Munden, TMP Systems' founder, called the panel and the firms' reports a "first step" in addressing the balance between the need to address climate change and protect the land rights of indigenous people.

"We're still refining our analytical approach," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "But so far, it suggests that the costs of compensation for displacing or impeding local peoples' customary forest use are significant. We're not saying that the protected area approach should be abandoned, but [the report] suggests the need for lower-cost approaches that achieve the intended outcomes – healthy forests and reduced greenhouse gas emissions."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2016/0204/How-indigenous-land-rights-factor-into-climate-goals>